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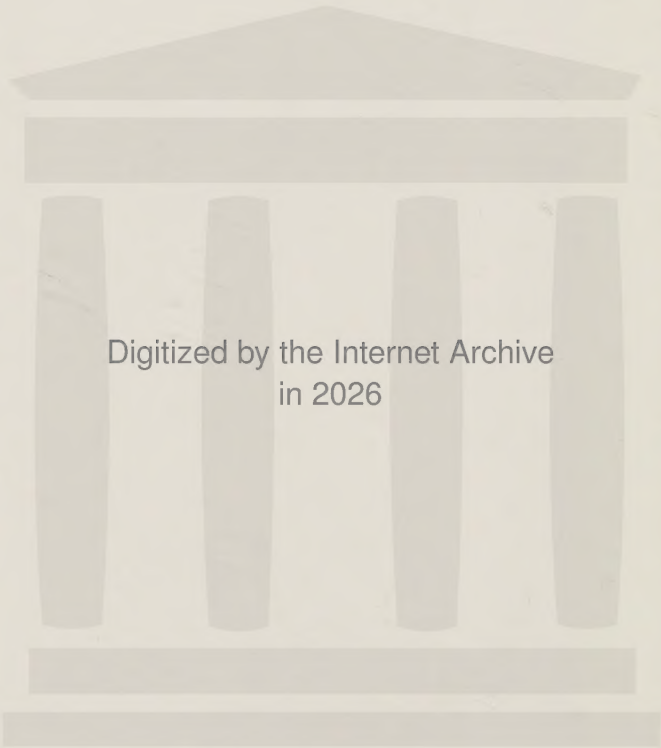
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HENRY WARD BEECHER

1813-1887

In Plymouth Church, Brooklyn

FROM STENOGRAPHIC REPORTS BY T. J. ELLINWOOD

VOLUME III.

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WATCHFULNESS.

"Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—MARK. xiv. 38.

Of all the passages of the New Testament which enjoin watchfulness—and they are very numerous—I have selected this, partly because it is the language of our Master, and partly because it gives the reason for watchfulness—*lest ye enter into temptation.*

Undoubtedly this is a military figure; although watching may be a domestic figure, ordinarily it is military.

A tower, a castle, a fort, is not content with simply the strength of its walls, and its various defences. Sentinels are placed all around about it, and they walk both night and day, and look out on every side to descry any approaching danger, that the soldiers within may put themselves at once in a condition to receive attack.

Still more are a moving army watchful, whether upon the march, or in the camp. They throw out advanced guards. The picket line is established by night and by day. Men are set apart to watch on purpose that no enemy may take them unawares; that they may constantly be prepared for whatever incursion the chances of war may bring upon them.

It is taken for granted that we are making a campaign through life. The assumption, all the way through, is, that we are upon an enemy's ground, and that we are surrounded, or liable to be surrounded, with adversaries who will rush in upon us, and take us captives at unawares. We are commanded, therefore, to do as soldiers do, whether in fort, or in camp—to be always vigilant, always prepared.

This exhortation and teaching runs through the scriptures from beginning to end. Dormancy, carelessness, heedlessness, false security, —we are warned against them continually. Vigilance, activity, watchfulness,—we are exhorted to these continually. Our Master interpreta

SUNDAY EVENING May 16, 1869.—LESSON: Psa. LXII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 199, 666, 657.

a part of this text in the very few petitions that belong to what is called "The Lord's Prayer."

Here he says, "Watch, lest ye enter into temptation"—as though that would often decide the moral condition of a man; as though his safety required that he should not go into temptation, and should not lie exposed to temptation. One petition in the Lord's prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation"—as though we should be safe if we were not led into it, and as though our safety would be doubtful if we were. No man knows, when he is led into temptation, whether he will come out safe. "A prudent man," we are told, "foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished." And that passage of Paul in Ephesians, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, stand," is to the same purport. Look out for danger, and prepare for it, and avoid it—that is the spirit of the injunction of the whole New Testament, as it was of the Old Testament. The dangers arising from men's appetites and passions cannot be met, on the whole, in any other way so well as by a beforehand preparation.

When passions are really aroused, there are few that can cope with them. They must spend their fury; and then we must gather up ourselves the best way we may afterwards. Here is the first position which I take in respect to watching.

They that are called—and who is not, in some form?—to carry his passions and appetites safely through life, can do it only on the theory of foreseeing the circumstances in which they are liable to have their appetites and passions aroused, and preparing beforehand to meet those circumstances. This is the only way in which a man can hope to go safely and securely. The theory by which a man throws off temptation, is, that he rouses up in his mind one feeling to counteract another. If a strong feeling is developed in a child, or in an adult, you cannot by a mere act of the will suppress that feeling. The will must rouse up some other feeling which shall dispossess it. And so the mind is made up of antagonistic, opposite feelings all the way through.

Where passions are excited, they are inherently so strong that there is no other overmastering power in the mind. Call on conscience—but conscience is feebler than passion. Call on reason—but reason has no opportunity to act under the blinding influence of the appetites. Call on self-respect, on resolution, on whatever else you may—but when the passions are fairly aroused they overmaster all resistance in the mind, and have a clean sweep. If, therefore, they are to be restrained, it must be by preparing beforehand. For you might just as well attempt to let a spark fall upon powder, and then take care of the powder, as to let temptation fall upon the passions, thinking that

then you can bind them. Beforehand or never! No repentance does you any good that does not prepare you by watchfulness to resist temptation. Very little is done, if one sins through the passions, by simply praying, and asking to be forgiven. That is well in its way; but as a preventive, unless it inspires a man to inquire how he felt, and what was the way in which the enemy approached, and prepares him for the approach again, no repentance is of any practical use. Passions are snares; and the way to extract a man's self from snares, is not to be caught in them. Passions are lions in ambush; and the way to deliver one's self from the lions is to take another path, and go where they are not. Passions are tigers that lurk on the corners and in the dark recesses of the street. Take another street. That will take you out of the tiger's reach. Passions are dangerous, like pitfalls, like precipices. It is not safe to get near them. You are safe if you give them a wide berth. You do not know that you are safe if you do not. And who is he that has not passions? They are the overmastering part in many natures. They swell, as the tides swell. They burn as the fires burn. They sweep as storms and winds sweep. And no man can perform his duty to himself—certainly not to his God—who does not understand that the battle of the passions is one which must be watched. It is the battle in which watchfulness is wisdom.

But men are not alike as regards their dangers. Some men's temptations are not from the side of the passions, because they have thin necks and heads, comparatively speaking. Their temptations lie in the direction of selfishness and pride. They are not subject to violent bursts of anger. They are not cruel. They are not likely to be carried away with gluttony. They are not likely to be overflowed with lu Their temptations steal in upon them in the form of avarice, and grasping, greedy desires. They are always looking after their own interests.

These, in another way, just as much as those, require to be overmastered, not in the point and at the moment of temptation, but beforehand. They are to be watched. A man is not to allow himself to come under the influence of those circumstances in which these peculiar dangers of his temperament and his disposition will be developed; and every man must, in the matter of watchfulness, understand his own self. Your weakness is not where another man's is. You are weak in one way—that is, you are strong in one way; and he is weak in another way—that is, he is strong in another way. For what we popularly call weakness, is strength.

If a man has temper so strong that it is all the time running away with him, we say that man's weakness is in his temper! If a man

has mightiness of avarice, men say of him "He has great weakness in the way of stinginess!"

Your excess of disposition, your strength of passion, and your temptableness are not the same as your neighbor's. Therefore, it is quite foolish for you to watch as your neighbor watches. Every man must set his watch according to his own disposition, and know his own disposition better than anybody else knows it.

If a fort is situated so that the weakest side is on the east, the commander, if he is wise, will set his watch there. He says, "I believe that if I defend this point, nothing can do me any harm," and sets his watch there. But suppose the commander of a fort whose weak place was on the west side, should put his force all on the east side! If he would defend his fort successfully he should put his soldiers where it is weak.

Here is a man that watches against pride; but your temptation is on the side of vanity. It will not do for you to watch against pride, because pride is not your besetting sin. There is many a man who flatters himself that because his neighbor has corrected his faults by gaining a victory over pride, all he himself needs to do is to gain a victory over pride. He has no difficulty in that, because he is not tempted in his pride. It is very easy to watch against an enemy that does not exist. It is very easy to gain a victory where there is no adversary. And if a man is very proud, and watches against vanity, how can he hope to escape from harm? And if a man is not proud, and he watches against pride, what advantage will he gain by it?

The point where you are liable to be assaulted is generally the point that you leave most exposed. Men are not willing to admit that they are assailable and vincible in the point where they are weakest. There is something humiliating in it. Men do not like to admit that they are as vain as a peacock. Men do not like to say, "I am as silly and as foolish as a monkey." They will say it of their neighbor, but they do not like to say it in regard to themselves. They do not like to even confess it to themselves; and they certainly do not like to confess it to any friend. And yet, every man must guard the point of weakness in himself. And watchfulness must not be general, or vague, or theoretical. Neither must it be the same as this man's or that man's, whose weakness is different from yours. Your watch must be set over against that which is weak in you. Are you slow of tongue, and reticent? Then you do not need to set a watch at the door of your mouth. And yet men generally pride themselves on such watchfulness as that. If a man has an excellence, he generally reads the scripture and the pious books that praise that excellence. If a man has a special virtue, he usually increases that, and insists upon it, and seems to be

afraid that that is the side he is going to sin on. Thus, a man who is already careful is always talking about prudence. Oh! prudence is such a virtue in him! A man who, having no disposition to talk, and no temptation to talk, manages his tongue, is the man who shakes his head at careless people, and is proud to say that *he* has taken good care of his tongue, and does not often sin in that way. God made your tongue heavy, and that is the reason it does not wag. It is not because you have a special virtue, but because you avail yourself of a natural peculiarity. And you pride yourself upon that!

It is the interest of every man not to hide from himself his ailment. What would you think of a man that was sick, and attempted to make himself believe that it was his foot that was ailing, when it was his heart? Suppose a man should come to his physician and have him examine the wrong eye, and pay for the physician's prescription, founded on the belief that his eye was slightly, but not much damaged, and should go away saying, "I am a great deal happier than I was," although the doctor had not looked at the diseased eye at all? If a man should have a cancer, or a deadly sore, on one arm, and should refuse to let the physician see that, but should show him the well arm, he would imitate what men do who use all deceits and delusions to hide their moral sores and weaknesses and faults, as far as possible, from themselves, from their physician, from all persons, and then congratulate themselves that they are not in danger.

Watchfulness requires that a man should be honest, and should know where he is, and where his danger is. Let others set their watch where they need it, and you set yours where you need it. Each man's watchfulness should be according to his temperament and constitution.

And that is not all. Every man should know what are the circumstances, the times and the seasons, in which he is liable to sin. To make this matter entirely practical, there are a great many who neglect to watch until the proper times and seasons for watching have passed away. Suppose your fault is of your tongue? Suppose your temper takes that as a means of giving itself air and explosion? With one man it is when he rises in the morning; and before breakfast he is peculiarly nervous and susceptible. It is then that he is irritable. It is then that things do not look right. And it is then that the boys get it, and the girls get it, and the servants get it, and his companion gets it, and everybody gets it. It is then, before he has had his coffee, that his tongue, as it were, snaps, and throws off sparks of fire.

With another man, it is at evening, when he is jaded, and wearied with the care and labor of the day. He has emptied himself of nervous excitement, and left only excitability. And then is the time when he is liable to break down in various ways.

Men must set their watch at the time when the enemy is accustomed to come. Indians usually make their attack at three or four o'clock in the morning, when men sleep soundest; and that is the time to watch against Indians. There is no use of doing it at ten o'clock in the morning. They do not come then. If it be when you are sick that you are most subject to malign passions, then that is the time when you must set your watch. Or, if it be when you are well that the tide of blood swells too feverishly in you, then that is the time when you must set your watch. If at one time of the day more than another, experience has shown that you are liable to be tempted, then in that part of the day you must be on your guard.

They that watch with the sick know that on the turning of the night is the critical and perilous period. Somewhere between midnight and morning more persons die than at any other time in the twenty-four hours. There is something in the temperature, or in the magnetic conditions, at that time, which renders death more liable; and therefore watchers bestow special attention upon patients at that time.

Everybody has his hours, his times and seasons, and his circumstances; and every man should learn them for himself; and every man should set his watch then and there. And frequently, by watching at the right time, you can easily carry yourself over all the rest of the day.

Men are required, also, to watch by reason of the external conditions into which they are thrown. And men are very unlike in this also Some men are at home very liable to temptation; but when they go abroad they are braced up, and are not so open to trial. I have known persons who were intolerable at home, who abused their wife, and abused their children, and seemed to think that home was made for a man to lay down watch in, and be as ugly as he felt like being; but whose love of approbation, or interest, when they went away from home seemed to restrain them. I have seen men who were most agreeable on the street, and wherever you met them, until they got home. And if a man is so constituted, he must set his watch at home.

On the other hand, there are many men who seem to be cross and crabbed away from home. Their sharp, keen, twinkling eye watches for advantage. If you met them on the street, or in the strifes of business, you would say that they were sapless and hard; and yet, when they come home, how gentle and generous they are! There is many a man that has no reputation in the street, who is idolized by those who see him within the walls of the household. If, then, a man's temptations are away from home, there is where he must watch.

The influences that come up around us from social connections also determine this, largely. There are many men who are like a ship aground. When the tide is out she does not leak—of course not: but

as soon as the tide comes up and surrounds her, she leaks at every seam, and is filled with water. And so there are men who, when the tide is up, are perfectly whelmed, but who, when the tide goes out, are perfectly free.

Now, men must see all these things respecting themselves. The pulpit cannot tell them about them. It is every man's business to know himself accurately, and to know how to carry himself morally from bad to good, from good to better, and from better to best. And it must be by foresight and vigilant watching.

We see that watching requires the knowledge of one's own nature, and of the times and seasons and circumstances in which his moods and dispositions and attributes are to act.

In view of this brief exposition, I remark, first, upon the condition of a man who has no plan of moral life; who has no knowledge of himself; who has no care; who never keeps account. We know very well what would be the career of any man in business who bought without consideration, and sold without calculation; who gave notes and made no record; who ran up debt upon debt, and forgot to-day what were the transactions of yesterday. How long before such a man would come to bankruptcy? In business, if it is to be successful, there must be system, not only, but foresight; and not only foresight, but constant watching on the part of the man of business respecting his affairs. And where any business man is lacking in foresight, and lacking in knowledge of its conditions, it is only a question of time. He is sure, sooner or later, to come to disaster.

And if that be so in the merchandise of things, however precious the commodities may be, how much more is it so in the merchandise of qualities! How can a man take so complex a thing as his own soul, and carry it safely in a world where it is surrounded and acted upon by varied influences; where the imagination is so soliciting; where the sentiments are played upon; where the very air seems to breathe upon us influences good or malign? How can a man take all his instincts and passions and appetites and carry them freely through the world, utterly thoughtless of what shall be done to him, of what he is, and of what he is to become? And yet, this is the fate of thousands. There are thousands of persons who are living so habitually. They think themselves to be very good, because they are not very bad. Many persons have no positive life or character. They never think; they never plan; they never eagerly fore-look; they never vigilantly guard. They are floating through life, and taking whatever fate may befall them. This is not wise, our Master being witness, who said, "Watch, lest ye enter into temptation." You cannot afford to be tempted. You certainly

cannot afford to be tempted under circumstances where you will break down.

We see, too, how, outside of that, this overweening confidence destroys men. A man that does not believe he is vincible, will not watch. If a man believes that he is invincible under assault, why should he watch? Men have an extravagant estimate of their own virtues and excellences. The result is that they are frequently not half so strong as they think they are. I know that experience in life makes one more and more reverent of that sentence of the Lord's Prayer, which I have quoted—"Lead us not into temptation." When we see what calamities befall men, we shudder, and thank God that we were never left to such circumstances. If that man fell under such a pressure, you say, "I thank God that he did not put me where that man's foot slid. I did not think there was much danger in that direction; but if that man was not able to bear the temptation, how do I know that I should not go down as he did?" To be sure, a man ought not to be a coward; but he is not wise to have such an overweening estimate of his power in the day of temptation, as not to humble himself, and, reverently, every day, say, "God deliver me from being tempted." He is not wise who says, "I am too straight ever to be crooked; I am too strong ever to be bent; I am too tough ever to be broken: let temptation play about me; I have a lightning-rod of resolution." By-and-by will come the flash, and strike clear through to the foundation of the house.

No man can afford, therefore, living in such a world as this, with the air full of invisible influences, and with dangers thundering on every side, to say, "I am in no danger; or, if there are dangers, I am just the champion that can meet them and overcome them." Such men are twisted off and thrown down, as a tornado twists off the stalwart oak and throws it in an instant to the ground.

But some men will say, "Is there, then, such poor stuff? Is there no such thing as a virtue that is able to stand in the day of battle? Is there no heroism? Are men to creep into their holes? Are men to shelter themselves behind bomb-proofs? Is this a world in which sin is the only thing that can go openly, and in which truth and righteousness must always fight behind bulwarks?" It is a world in which men, at least, when they are veterans, may venture as they did not in youth. It certainly is a world in which virtue is not to be cowardly. But it is not to be presumptuous; it is not to be extra hazardous. Although when the path of duty is once marked out, no man should shrink from it because it is dangerous. For providence never puts a man on any path of duty without making provision for his safety. And it is always safe to follow the line of duty where it is marked out. But it is not safe for any man to provoke temptation, and throw himself in its way. Therefore

men that are true, pure and upright, sin against their own souls when they purposely and self-confidently venture under the influence of temptation. There are a great many persons that are young in conscience, that are inexperienced, and that are to a certain extent innocent, who permit themselves to do what the riper experience even of bad men would never permit them to do. There is such a thing as *dallying* with temptation. Many a maiden will insensibly, and step by step, allow herself to be led to things that, if not wrong, are yet so near to it that they lie in its very twilight; and she is all the time excusing to herself such permissions and such dalliance, and saying, "I do not intend to do wrong. I shall in due time recover myself." There is many a man who takes the serpent into his hand, because it is lithe, and graceful, and burnished, and beautiful, and plays with that which in some unguarded moment will strike him with its poison fangs; and it is poor excuse, when this dalliance has led him to the very edge of temptation, and has struck the fatal poison into him, for him to say, "I did not mean to." The mischief is done. The damnation is to come. And it is poor comfort to say, "I did not mean to." Pass by it; come not near it; keep far from it, and then you will be safe. But it is not safe for innocent, or inexperienced, or unconscious, or inconsiderate virtue, to go, by dalliance, near to things that carry in them the very venom of Satan. And yet, how many there are that laugh, and are gay, and graceful, with a thousand quips and cranks, and beautiful as a bubble that rises on the sea, and like a bubble burst in a moment! "Watch, lest ye enter into temptation."

There are a great many persons who are not liable to the temptations and destruction which come from the inflammation of passion. There are a great many persons who allow themselves to follow an inquisitive eye. They like to explore. They like to know what is going on. There are a great many young men that come down to New York who like to see what gamblers do, and have a great interest in going into their saloons and their dens, and allowing themselves to nibble, and see what will be done to them. There are a great many that go to the strange woman's house. It is pure *curiosity* that leads them there! They go to *take statistics*. There are a great many that want to *see life;* and what they mean by seeing life, is seeing rottenness. They go to see what depravity can do. They go to filthy dens. They go to brutal rings. They go where sport means cruelty, and where pleasure means lust—lust that, like the mud of the unquiet sea, cannot rest. They go to see, not intending harm. And yet, in the language of scripture, the "dart strikes through the liver," of hundreds and thousands who deliberately carry themselves within the sweep of these things.

What should you think of a man who, coming down to New York, should say, "I have had quite an experience this morning. I have been up to one of the shambles where they were butchering; and I saw them knock down oxen, and saw them cut their throats, and saw the blood flow in streams from the great gashes. I spent a whole half day there, looking at men killing, and killing, and killing." What would you say of a man that said, "I have been crawling through the sewers under the street; for I want to know what is at the bottom of things in this city?" What kind of curiosity would that be? What should you think of a man who went where he could see the offal of hospitals and dissecting rooms, and went wallowing in rottenness and disease, because he wanted to increase his knowledge of things in general? And yet, here are men who take things more feculent, more fetid, more foul, more damnable and dangerous—the diseases, the ulcers, the sores and the filth of the appetites and the passions; and they will go wading and looking at things that a man should shut his eyes on if they were providentially thrown before him. Why, there are some things that it is a sin to look at twice. And yet there are men who hunt them up!

It is said in one of the old "Lives of the Saints," that the devil found a young man at a theatre, and took possession of him; and the saint rebuked him, and said, "Why do you take one of the Lord's children?" and the devil said, "What business has one of the Lord's children on my ground?" It is thus in temptation. Men tempt the devil. They send a message to him, inviting him to come and take them.

Rising from these youthful indiscretions and depravities and destructions, there are those who are more considerate, and are less liable to these inflammatory temptations, and are marking their course in life on this principle: "I will not lie; but I will take every advantage I can, just inside of lying." And they run their line of life so near to deceit that it is equivocal. It is very difficult to tell, sometimes, which side of the line they are on. They are conscientious in this. They say, "I do not mean to lie. I mean to take care." But they go so near that the least joggle of their wheel, if they run over an unexpected stone, throws them over the line. They get back just as soon as they can; but the mischief is done, and cannot be repaired.

There are men who live so near to cheating that though they do not mean to cheat, circumstances cannot bend them without pushing them over. There are many men who are like an apple tree in my garden, whose trunk and roots, and two-thirds of the branches, are in the garden, and one-third of whose branches are outside of the garden wall. And there are many men whose trunk and roots are on the side of

honesty and uprightness, but who are living so near the garden wall that they throw their boughs clear over into the highway where iniquities tramp, and are free.

It is never safe for a man to run so near to the line of right and wrong, that if he should lose a wheel he would go over. It is like traveling on a mountain road near a precipice. You should keep so far from the precipice that if your wagon breaks down there is room enough between you and the precipice. Otherwise you cannot be safe.

There are a great many men who are pious on this principle: "How economically can I go to heaven?" Virtue is to them like gold to a traveler; and they say, "Now I want to spend just as little as I can. I want to make this voyage just as cheaply as possible." Men mean to get to heaven; but they do not mean that it shall cost them any more virtue than they can possibly help. Everything that the world will allow them to have they take. They practice as little self-denial as they can get along with, hoping that there will be an equalization of everything in the world to come.

Oh! what a dangerous and degrading condition is that man in whose life lies right along the twilight line, where he is liable at any moment to be cast over into darkness.

This subject comes very near to those who have been overtaken by sins and fermenting follies. There are many men who have been caught by wrong, and are honestly striving to break away from it. There are persons who are receding from depths of wickedness. They should never again even look back to the ground from which they have fled. When God called Lot's family from Sodom, and told them to flee for their lives, he said to them, "Look not back." It was dangerous for a person fleeing from Sodom even to look back. It is a grand lesson of history hung out as a warning to us. Such lingering looks cast back are perilous. They tend to lead people again to that which is evil. It is very bad for a man, in leaving his old sins and temptations, not to break with them so that they are his enemies.

A man that has been in the habit of drinking may restore himself; but he must put that habit under his foot, and keep it there. The path toward reformation is a steep and burning one; but he must walk in it. For a man who has once become addicted to drinking, to allow himself to go where intoxicating liquors are sold, or for him to permit himself to meddle with the cup in the slightest degree, is insanity. It is the very infatuation of folly. For a man who is in the habit of indulging in strong drink, there is only one safe course. He should keep so far from temption that temptation cannot touch him. "Lead us not into

temptation," should be the prayer of such a man from day to day, and from night to night.

Those of you who are attempting to break away from cards and houses of infamy; those of you who are attempting to break away from those lusts, those corrupt inclinations, that draw men into perdition, should never go near your old companions, or your old haunts. There is but one single way that you can escape destruction; and that is by shutting your eyes to the past, and looking forward to the city of refuge. Flee! *Flee!*

It is not safe for you to dally. To be a good man is an earnest business, and ought to occupy one's whole time. You can better afford to be half and half in any thing else than in virtue, and religion, and manliness. You are to be wholly for God, or you are liable to be wholly for Satan.

My Christian friends, we have a thousand reasons for *watching lest we enter into temptation.* We have experiences every day of those manifold temptations which live, and are like dust on a mirror, or like scratches upon its back. We are liable to fall into sins and defilements, as well as other men. But those who have not the hope that the Christian has, those who are in the midst of the world, are met in every direction by fantasies and follies, by delusions and deceits, and by vehement temptations of every sense and every appetite; and how much more do they need to watch and to pray that the power of God and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost may come down upon their soul and quicken it, and give it strength! How do they need to *watch and pray lest they enter into temptation!*

May God keep you from temptation; but, that he may do it, keep *yourselves* from temptation—from its places; from its materials and instruments; from its circumstances; from all its moods. May God inspire you with that vigilance by which you shall foresee your own dangers, and either avoid them or meet them armed for victory.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We render thee thanks, our Heavenly Father, for the great mercies with which thou hast surrounded us ever since we were born. Thou hast not been rigorous, but lenient. Thou hast not given by measure, but overflowing, surpassing expectation. Thou hast created us royally. Not any other thing is created with such powers, and with such developments of them all. Nor is there before any other creature upon the earth open such a future as there is open before us; such growth in every part of the mind; such richness and refinement; and such promise of communion with spirits above, and with thine own self. We are not of the clod, though we are born of the dust. We are not of the animal creation, though to us there is given an animal body. We are to gain, triumphantly, a growth out of it, and above it, and beyond it. We are to come into communion with Thee. The foreshadowing is already upon us. The earlier experiences are upon us. What is the wonder of the meaning, what is the magnitude, of that communion, we cannot comprehend. It is our folly to believe that we can reason of these higher things, and know of them from the light of revelation, and the slender light of experience; for they surpass knowledge. We see at the best but as through a glass darkly. At the very highest we are only children in things spiritual, and do not know how to put them together, nor how to draw the mighty circle of everlasting and universal truth. Yet, though we cannot give the bounds and the outlines, we believe that we are coming unto a glorious likeness to thee; unto higher powers; unto nobler disclosures; unto a more blessed residence. We look forward to that. We believe, with humble faith, that by purity, by hope, by love, we are culturing ourselves for that great unknown blessedness

O Lord, our God! behold the strife and the turmoil that often is in us. Behold the temptations which lie in wait around about us. Thou dost behold whenever we call. Thou hast marked the path before us, and we hear thy voice saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." If we stop our ears and will not hear; if we blind our eyes, and will not see, and rush into danger, and are overwhelmed, it is our fault. Thou, O God, wouldst succor; thou wouldst warn: thou hast set up thy law as a guide everywhere. Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may take heed to our ways. Grant that we may walk in the paths which experience shows to be safe and profitable. May we not be content. Certainly may we not be content to live for the pleasures of life. For us is immortality. Why should we live as though the world were all. For us is the certainty of universal blessedness, and high and holy companionship. Why should we say, "Let us make three tabernacles for us here."

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may be inspired more and more to overcome the present, to rise superior to its pleasures, and become stronger than its temptations. May we take hold of the invisible world. May we draw something of our life from it, and rejoice more and more that the day draws near when the disclosure shall come, the shadows shall fall, the morning shall break, and we shall rise into eternal knowledge and blessedness.

We beseech of thee to have compassion upon any that are infirm; upon all that are in trouble; upon all that wrestle inwardly; upon all those that are discouraged; upon all those that are tempted; upon those that are thralled and snared; upon those that are sick, and heart-sick. O thou Comforter! be thou more gracious to them than they think. Raise up friends for the friendless. Raise up those that shall teach the ignorant. May there be that true friendship which shall draw the friendless into ways of virtue.

Have compassion upon those that are tempted more than they are able to bear. May all those that are out of the way be succored. Draw, we beseech of thee, more and more the outcast back again to virtue and to integrity Let thy kingdom come everywhere in this nation, and throughout the earth. Hasten that glorious day of prediction when Christ shall take unto him his power, and reign in all the earth. Grant that we, by prayer and labor and faith, may bring on, according to the measure of our strength, something of the blessedness of that day. O Lord! how long shall the earth wait for thee? Come, Lord Jesus. Even so, come quickly. And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and forever. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, bless the word of exhortation and of warning. Deliver those that are snared. Bring out of captivity those that are bound. Save those that are in the thrall of temptation. Surely is the net spread for them, and they run into it more foolishly than the bird into the snare. Grant that these delusions may pass away. Give virtue, give power, give victory, to all thy people that are called to this warfare of the soul.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be some to-night that shall turn away from bad courses, from indiscretions, from all circumstances of danger. And bring us all, when life is over, to that blessed land where there shall be no more temptations; where there shall be no more sickness; where there shall be only joy and purity forever and forever. *Amen.*

PAUL AND DEMETRIUS.

I propose to remark upon the history contained in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts, beginning with the 23d verse, and continuing to the end of the chapter.

This scene took place at Ephesus, in Asia. Paul, together with several of his companions, had sentered there for no inconsiderable time. He had gone from place to place, returning, from time to time, and making that, as it were, the center of his field. And his labor in various cities had been eminent, as we learn from the testimony of his enemies, and the fruit of it had been very great—so much so as to produce a very important impression upon that part of the public who were discerning and forelooking.

"And the same time there arose no small stir about that way; for a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen."

Shrines were little images of the temple of Diana, together with the statue of the goddess Artemis, or Diana, as we are accustomed to call her. These were made and distributed among the worshippers. Every very pious man had one in his house. Of course, at Ephesus everybody was pious. This temple, which was between four and five hundred feet long, and some two or three hundred feet broad, surrounded by a colonnade of more than a hundred and thirty or a hundred and forty magnificent columns, stored with treasures of art, and very rich withal in gold and silver, was much resorted to—so much so that the city itself reaped a great harvest, and became very proud of their temple, and very proud of their goddess. And so piety flourished there.

He "called together" these craftsmen, "with the workmen of like occupation"—of affiliated trades—"and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth."

Having uttered that one single sentence, and hit the nerve, he had nothing more to say on that subject. He did not need to say any more.

Sunday Evening, July 25, 1869.—Lesson: Psa. LXII. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos 907, "Shining Shore," 1163.

For now they were prepared to be both patriotic and pious! Once strike men's pocket fairly, and then show them that duty to their pocket requires that they should be pious, and there will be no end to their piety; or that they should be patriotic, and they will be furiously patriotic! And so Demetrius, who was a discerner of human nature, was in some regards very much to be respected. He was a shrewd man; and he called together all these craftsmen and fellow laborers, and said to them one salient thing—"Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." And then he went on:

"Moreover, ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away the people, saying that they be no Gods which are made with hands. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Incidentally, he felt it a pity that the craft should suffer; but he could not endure that the temple should suffer.

There is nothing that attaches people so much to their religion as to have every body admiring it. A church that every body talks about seems, to those that belong to it, to be a most admirable church. And here was this temple, and this Diana, that all the world admired. The people that dwelt in the town where the world came, where they bought shrines and images of her, and where, tarrying, they spent their money—how must they have adored their most profitable goddess!

"And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath"—for piety is very apt to be full of wrath; it very easily gets angry—"and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius, and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre"—the great public forum; "and when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not, and certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre."

Paul would have gone in. He was as brave as a lion, and as faithful to his friends as fidelity itself.

"Some, therefore, cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

It is an exquisite picture of a mob—a set, probably, of several thousand people, all confusedly hustled together in this vast forum, bawling at the top of their voice, some one thing, and some another; and the greatest part of them not knowing what they were there for, except to help make the noise. And, after all, this is the way in which truth has been attacked mostly in this world. People have got mad at it; have bawled at it; and have had mobs, and riots, and all manner of physical, forceful proceedings against it. But of that hereafter.

"And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward." Alexander wished to explain matters to them. He "beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence." Well,

why did not they let him—these Greeks, these Ephesians; these men that had such a splendid temple, and such a profitable goddess, and that had come together to have a consultation as to what they should do? They had caught one of the men, and he wanted to make his statement to them, and beckoned to them to hold their peace, and be quiet while he should do it. What was the objection to hearing him?

Now comes the only sensible man that seems to have belonged to the crowd:

"When the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing, then, that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore, if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another."

If he had said this at the beginning of the turmoil, he might as well have talked to the wind. You never can do anything with an excited man, or an excited crowd, taking them on the rising tide; but if you can only get them to bawl for two hours, until they are tired, then there is some chance for you. The town-clerk knew it. And you see how after this crowd had expended their energies in howling, they were disposed to listen.

"If ye enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly."

And then, having secured their good sense, he touches their fear a little:

"For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse."

They were, you know, Roman subjects, and the government was very jealous, particularly of great crowds of people, fearing they might have some political design masked under their apparent zeal. They had felt the sword and rod, and this appeal was very significant to them.

"When he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly."

So the foam passed off. And, yet the history stands here; and it is a history not without many points of profound interest to us.

Paul had been preaching Christ as against idols, it seems by the testimony of Demetrius. If Paul had preached moral truth as against heathenism, in any such general and philosophical manner that it did not touch men's practical affairs, he might have gone on preaching to this day, and nobody would ever have thought of opposing him.

Men have talked a great deal about the toleration of Rome, and the Roman government, and the toleration of ancient civilized nations, as compared with the intolerance of Christian nations and Christian times. Wherever, in ancient or modern times, men preach truths adverse to the current truths in such a way that they are kept, like the clouds, high

above men's heads, in the abstract region, they can preach them just as long as they please. Paul might have discussed the abstract questions of religion, of the structure of the moral government of God, and the various questions of idols and idolators, to the end of his life, and no Demetrius would have risen up. It was not until he so discussed them that the abstract became concrete; it was not until the truth that he preached found an application to men—to their occupations, to their morals, to their interests, and so to their prejudices—that his preaching became offensive.

This reconciles the statement that men love truth, and are willing to hear the truth, with the other statement, that men resist light, and will not have it. It is true that men do love truth, abstractly considered. There is a pleasure in seeing that a thing is true in a different way, or in a higher way, than a man is accustomed to see it. And on one side men do like the truth. But still, that feeling is not so strong in them as their interests are. When the truth fitted itself into their apprehension, they liked it; but when it is carried forward with such applications and such various inflictions that their lower nature rises up against their higher nature, and preponderates, then men become haters of the truth.

Again, all great truths do reach down, finally, to men's private and business life. There is no great moral truth which does not ramify and radicate itself, so that if it be faithfully preached, first or last it will find its way down to men's thoughts, and feelings, and conduct, and business, and politics, and every thing else. I will defy any man to preach any great salient moral truth thoroughly, and not touch the artist's business. No man can preach any great salient moral truth thoroughly, and not find himself meddling with questions which concern courts, merchants, statesmen, politicians. For all truth, carried out, runs into the practical.

When, therefore, it is said, These churches and ministers have no right to meddle with political questions, it is saying substantially this: that ministers may preach truths as long as they preach them so that they do not hit anywhere; as long as they preach them abstractly; but that when they have carried them out in such a way that they take hold of men's interests, and so begin to be practical, then they must stop, because they have no right to preach politics!

In no other land as much as in this does preaching so soon become political: for, as we profess to be Christians, we have a right to bring all public questions to the arbitrament of revealed truth. And, first or last, at one time or another, almost every question that belongs to religion, becomes a political question. It would not have given the slightest offence, in years gone by for a man to have preached monogamy—

that a man ought to have but one wife; that men ought to maintain the New Testament doctrine on this subject. A man might have thundered against polygamy, without exciting any opposition. But the time is coming, very likely, in which there will be two parties bidding for votes. Utah will be between them; and one party will wink at polygamy, while the other party will be strong for monogamy. And then according to this doctrine, no man will have a right to preach on that subject, because he has no right to preach politics.

There is no question, from the top to the bottom of society, that may not become, by the eddyings and shiftings of public affairs, a political question. And it is held that men must not preach upon it. And if they do, some Demetrius, ordained or unordained, will rise up and say, "These men are unsettling the community, and also disturbing our interest, or our polity, as the case may be.

Paul had no conception of what he was doing. He was preaching Christ fearlessly, freely, to the understanding, to the conscience, to every one of the feelings of the human heart. He had no idea that there was such a man on the face of the earth as Demetrius. He did not dream that he was hurting anybody. And yet, you see what were the ramifications of moral truth, and how, as the result of Paul's preaching, there uprose this Demetrius, and his craftsmen, and all the neighborhood. It bore testimony against them. Though Paul did not know it, every one of them had been hit by him. So subtle, so far beyond what he realized, was the outreach and power of the Gospel, that when Paul was preaching Christ with one thought and one purpose, he found that he was doing vastly more than he intended, reaching down to men that he never knew existed, and to occupations that he never had in his mind. And so long as the world stands, faithful preaching will not only do what the preacher aims to do, but a great deal more. It will do unconscious things. It will reach men that he never thought of, and interests that he never contemplated.

Truth may be handled with unnecessary offence; it may be rudely handled; it may be preached with intemperateness and disproportion; it may be preached without a wise regard to times and seasons. There is such a thing as skill and wisdom in keeping the passions of men down, while you appeal to their reason and their higher feelings. There is such a way of preaching that under favorable circumstances we can sometimes persuade men to hear the truth against their interests. But, on the whole, in dealing with communities of men, there is no way in which you can so preach the truth that it will destroy men's interests, and have them remain peaceable, and like it.

In the development of Gospel truth, society is obliged continually to change its interests. It is indispensable to growth, that the lower

forms of life should change to higher ones, and some occupations, therefore, should be modified. Things that are entirely reputable in one age, become entirely disreputable in another. Things that our fathers hardly thought of would now cast a man out of society. This belongs to the necessity of development and growth.

When you are preaching, not for any special work in any single man's soul, but so as to renovate the community, make sure of this, that you never can preach so as to be felt and have power in the community, without raising against you all those whose interests must suffer.

That was what our Master meant when he said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." He knew (for he needed not that any man should testify to what was in man) that the strong man of the heart would not be bound or cast out of his own castle unless there was strength superior to his brought to bear upon him. He knew that men who lived by pampering superstitions, and lusts, and evil passions, would not consent to be purified without a struggle. Satan, either in man or in society, is neither to be bound or cast out, except there be a mighty power over against him.

You will therefore be prepared to say that this Demetrius was a very bad man. That is the general opinion. I do not think myself that he was a saint: but was he exceptionally bad? I do not know that he was worse than any ordinary man here. I doubt if there are not five hundred Demetriuses in this congregation—that is to say, men who, under the same circumstances, would do just exactly what Demetrius did. We look upon him with all the light and refinement of our modern consciences; but that is not a fair judgment. We must go back and look at the way in which he was educated, and consider the plane on which he stood, and see how things looked to him, and then form our judgment of him. We must remember, in the first place, that he knew no religion but heathenism, and that he supposed that to be the best religion there was in the world. We must remember, too, that he occupied the same relation to his religion that the Tract Society does to the Christian religion. The Tract Society makes shrines—little books, little instructive treatises, representing their notions of religion. What was Demetrius doing? He made no books; but he was making little images of the temple, and little statues of Diana. And they were sent into everybody's house, in order that men might have their religion right by them. It is a convenient thing to have a pocket god; and he was helping people to have little portable deities of their own. And according to the doctrine of symbolism, I do not know why they had not a right to employ those things. Symbolic teachings, statues, garments, were employed by the most intelligent of the old heathen, to help their imagination. They did not worship the stone, the gold, nor

the silver. They said, "These are mere remembrancers. We look at them, and see God." And our prayers serve very much the same purpose. They quicken our imagination, and help us to approach the real God.

Demetrius, a shrewd man, without doubt, probably said to himself, "It is better for the people to stick to their religion. And what if making their shrines is profitable to me, I am working at a religious business; I am working for the good of men's consciences, and for the furtherance of the faith. I am doing just the thing that a devout man ought to do. And as our religion is associated with our country, I am making men not only religious, but patriotic. And this wanderer, this vagabond Jew, himself, when he has discovered what we are so proud of, will believe in Ephesianism." He felt that he was doing right in fostering the spirit that prevailed among them. He felt that here was a man preaching against the settled religion of the people, and against the settled policy of the state, and offending the prejudices of the best portion of the community. He felt that here was a man destroying all the educated notions of the common people, and preparing them to break loose from their ideas of religion, and embrace blank infidelity. Here was a man that was a Jew, that was not born in Asia anyhow, that was born away off in Palestine, and was setting forth a strange God; and Demetrius felt everything in him rise up with indignation. And it is not difficult to say that though that was not the wisest and best course, it was not a very flagitious one, judging from ordinary specimens.

And consider that doubtless he had, in a certain sort, a sincere belief in Diana, his tutelary divinity; and that he could say, with some truth, "My conscience pledges me to do this." We know, from the narration, and the way it is given, that the mainspring of his conduct was interest. He said so, distinctly, to the craftsmen. "Ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." Being a sagacious merchant, he probably looked over his accounts, and said, "I have not made as many shrines as usual. The demand for them is becoming less and less, because this Paul has been going about unsettling the faiths of men. If this goes on, I cannot tell what will become of my business." He looked at the matter as a sagacious manufacturer. And selfishness was stirred up in him, unquestionably. But I think he had a feeling of devoutness, according to his knowledge and condition.

And that brings up the question of mixed motives. Was it wrong for Demetrius to gain all this advantage through a selfish consideration? No. Was it wrong for him to mingle with his piety, such as it was, and with his patriotism, such as it was, personal regard? No, it was not wrong. If you were to take away from men all that religion which comes

from their personal interest in it; if you were to take away from them that love of country, that desire for good government, that patriotism, which springs from, or is based upon, selfish considerations, I am afraid there would be very little operative patriotism in the community. If you were to take away from men their attachment to their country as the place where they live, and where their children live, you would remove the greater part of that patriotism which animates the masses of the community. And yet, they may have some pure patriotic feeling.

In that great up-heaving and purifying convulsion, our late civil war, at first men's more generous sentiments flamed up. They were ready to give almost everything for their country, without a thought of their own interest. They acted enthusiastically and heroically. But after a few months had passed by, how many were willing to come forward and give their money to the government? And what was the argument for taking the bonds, but this: "If the Government is not worth anything, what is any bank or any institution going to be worth in this country? Our interest, therefore, requires that we should maintain the Government." And how soon the idea of men's going into the army without money and without price died out! How soon pecuniary considerations came in!

But do you suppose that because a man took a large bounty, and received regular pay, in the army, he had no patriotism? He had some patriotism. But he acted from mixed motives. A man may act from strong selfish motives, from strong avaricious motives, and yet there may be mingled with these higher motives. And it is just this that deceives men. Because they see that their self-interest runs in the direction of religion or patriotism, they gild it over, and say, "All the force which is inspired by the lower basilar feelings takes on the form of religious feelings;" and they give credit for all that force to the religious feelings. Men think, for instance, that their zeal in religion is purely a matter of conscience, not stopping to consider how much that zeal depends on their standing in the church, on their social position, on the influences that surround them, and how far it is their interest to be zealous concerning particular truths of religion.

This question, then, comes up, where there are mixed motives: Does the presence of the lower vitiate or destroy the higher? No. It adulterates it, but it does not destroy it. Where a man acts for a right thing from a pure motive; where a man sees the truth, and follows it conscientiously, from love to God, from love to man, and from love to the truth itself, that is the highest form of conduct. But if afterwards there is the consciousness in his bosom that while he acts from these higher motives interest comes in, this lower motive does not vitiate the others. It is his duty to see that the lower motive is kept in its proper

place, but the higher motives are not destroyed by the existence of the lower one.

Sometimes when persons examine themselves, they say, "I fear I am not truly a Christian, because I find that I am acting from such and such lower motives, as well as from higher ones." Well, there are very few people who act from less than five or six different motives. Almost all our actions spring from complex motives. Our faculties are complex, and it is reasonable to suppose that our motives will be complex. But when the motives are in the main of the highest order, if a lower motive comes in, though you may not be on the highest plane, yet you may be within the bounds of righteousness. When, however, the lower motive is the strongest, and religion is merely an embellishment of that; when the animating motive—that which gives life and power—is self-interest, and conscience is used as a varnish or cloak, then it becomes detestable, pernicious. It is what we call "hypocrisy." It is acting from one motive under the pretense that the action proceeds from another motive. A man is not necessarily a hypocrite who acts from different classes of motives; but he who acts from a lower class of motives under the pretense that he is acting from a higher class, is hypocritical.

Now, I will not deny that Demetrius had some patriotism, and some sentiment of devotion. I think it very likely that he had. But it is very evident that his feeling of self-interest was stronger than either of these. He was not a good man; and yet he was not an extremely bad man. He was just like men that you see every day. There are many men who do business with no better motives than those which actuated him. A man does a kindness; and you find, when you get at his motive, that it was a selfish one. "Why did you do that kindness?" you may say to him. "To tell you the truth," he says, "I want accommodation; and this man is cousin to one of the principal directors of that corporation, and I knew it would help him; and I knew that when I asked for accommodation it would be in his power to help me. You never lose anything by being kind. I tell my friends that they ought to be kind.' That is not thought to be very bad; and it is just precisely the same that Demetrius did, acting from one motive in connection with other stronger ones, and keeping the best looking one ahead for show, and the other ones out of sight for work! And so we find it all through society, and all through life. There is nothing more common than for men to hang one motive outside where it can be seen, and keep the others in the background to turn the machinery.

From this narrative we may derive the principle or statement that moral truth is of transcendently more value in every community than

all the material interests of society. It is of more value than the order and peace of society itself. There is an impression that the Gospel is such a soothing syrup, such a tranquilizing system, that if a preacher knows his business, men going to hear him will be made very peaceable and happy, and will go away feeling very good. If, on the other hand, a man disturbs the community, and when he preaches men are violently excited, and there are disputations, and parties are formed, it is thought that these results are *prima facie* evidence that he is not a true preacher of the Gospel. And it has passed into a byword—we see it in all the fifth-rate newspapers, and hear it from the lips of pot-house politicians (those men whose wisdom rises no higher than the pas sions)—that ministers ought to be "followers of the meek and lowly Jesus," and that they "go beyond their sphere" when they preach so as to disturb anybody.

But did you notice what I read in the opening service from our Savior's lips?

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." I have come to teach men the truth, and to form a conscience for the truth. I have come to make men feel that it is more important that they should follow the convictions of moral sense, than that they should follow their interests or their friendships. Every man must stand up in his place and say, "This is the truth, and I will abide by it." And then men will be disturbed by his example. Therefore he must be their foe. Then there will be division and quarreling. And yet, he must stand firm to the truth.

If you go home, saying, "I must follow the Lord," and everybody in the household says, "We are following Mammon;" or, "We are following the Goddess of Pleasure," it is for you to stand by your higher light. And you will give offence. You will be an element of discord. Nevertheless, you must be firm, though your doing so leads to disruption. If the father and mother will worship Baal, and the child would worship Jehovah, the child must not yield. And if there be quarreling, it is not the child's fault.

If men in a community see that good morals are being dissolved, and that the tone of conscience is being lowered, and they preach a truth that is calculated to raise the tone of conscience, and make it more imperious than it was, so that it shall rebuke those who are supplying food for men's passions and lusts, and so that it shall come in conflict with ignorance and superstition, I take the side of the disturber. I am bound to preach the truth so that every man shall see

the right better, and so that the whole of society shall live on a higher plane. I am bound to preach so as to bring about the reorganization of society—peaceably if I can; but if men will not let it be done peaceably, it is their lookout, and not mine. I am bound to preach so as to inspire men with the conception that they who live for the present only, live as animals live. I am bound to preach so that men shall avoid grog-shops and pawnbrokers' offices. But the grog-shop keeper and the pawnbroker do not like it; and they say, "My business will be ruined if this preaching is not stopped."

That which you recognize as being true in its lower applications, is just as true in its higher applications. And that which our Master did, and which the old apostles did, has been done by every one that is worthy to be called an apostle since the days of Christ.

There has been a great dispute as to whether there are any legitimate descendants of the apostles. I think there are. They are supposed to come by the imposition of hands. *I* believe they come by the imposition of hands. It is supposed that the hand is placed on the head of the candidate. No, it is placed a little lower down—upon the heart. And it is the hand of the Holy Ghost. That is a lineal descendant of the apostles who has a clearer and higher understanding of the truth than those about him, and who so preaches it that it disturbs the consciences, the peace and the settled order, of those about him, and disturbs them just so far as is necessary to the work of reformation. If men say that in Rome there are descendants of Peter or Paul, let them show that they are purer and more disinterested than other men; that they go out to reform the world just as those apostles did; that they break up wrong; that they build up right; that they bring light where there is darkness. If they prove their apostolicity in this manner, I shall not have a word to say. I think him to be a descendant of the apostles who preaches as the apostles did, and as the Master did, that which benefits men's souls. I have no objection to bishops. I should like to see a hundred more than there are. I do not envy them their robes, nor their dioceses, nor their honors. But if they say that they are apostolic in any other sense than that in which any other good man is apostolic, I should like to see what they do. If they are imitating the example of the apostles in the community, and do not care for honor nor for ease; if they are probing wickedness in the community; if they are making sacrifices for the cause of God; if they are revolutionizers by the power of Christ's truth, then I say, Yes, they are not only bishops, but *apostolic* bishops. They are called of God by the unction of the Holy Ghost. The evidence of it is, that they are doing the work of the apostles. He that does the apostles' work is of the apostles. He is of the same *lineage*, if you please to call it so

That is the only apostolic descent that I believe in, and the only one that I think will be believed in long. He that holds the same Gospel as the apostles did, and preaches it in the same way and in the same spirit, is an apostolic preacher, ordained or unordained.

This work is going on in our time. Do not think, because it has gone on through one phase triumphantly, that the end has come. Do not suppose, because we have fought a great battle for liberty, that the conflict is over. Do not think that the time for agitation is passed, and that now we are going to have a blessed peace. You are not perfect yet. Society is not perfect. And industry is far from being perfect. It is badly, corruptly, unjustly organized. Social life is not pure. There are ten thousand questions which are so crooked that they belong to the prophecy that *crooked places must be made straight.* There are places that are depressed, and must be exalted. There are great wrongs that tower up like mountains, which must come down The preaching of the Gospel is to be doctrinal; but all doctrinal preaching is to come down and touch our life.

This nation will be agitated on a great many questions. All nations are being agitated on these same questions. The truth of God has not done its full work anywhere. The power of God in Jesus Christ, the power of the divine principle of love, to make the individual character beautiful, is not expended. We are to live on a higher plane. We are to think more nobly and truly. We are to feel more divinely and heroically. We are to live lives that shall approximate more nearly to the divine model.

And as it is with the individual, so is it with society. There are to be expansions of social intercourse. There are to be purifications and refinements. They are to cross men's interests, and upset men's opinions. Civil society, in its own structure, is to undergo a revolution. But it is not to be so always. "The earth is the Lord's," and it is one day to be redeemed. That day is coming little by little in Europe. Little by little it is coming in Asia. It is yet to come in every country on the globe. The world is to be disenthralled and purified. The whole globe is to be, in its totality, higher than the most favored Christian community, or the most favored Christian family, or the most eminent Christian individual. And before that time comes, the truth must have *free course to run and be glorified.* It must be preached in fidelity and power.

My young friends, who are beginning life, beware of taking sides with current opinions. Opinions are not true simply because they are held to be true in your day. Whatever thing comes to you with the light of the Holy Ghost, inspiring meditation and research; whatever thing inspires you with a nobler life, and to a higher activity in that

life—that take. Range yourselves on the side of coming truth. Range yourselves on the side of clearer manifestations of God. Do not run after every novelty. Do not go hither and thither for change. But wherever you are continually drawn, your conscience and reason bearing witness that you are drawn in a direction in which you are less animal and selfish and proud, and in which you are nobler, truer, simpler, and sweeter-minded, there go. Follow that call; for it is a divine call. Satan will never tempt you to go toward God. By no blandishment will he make you humbler and better. Whatever may have been your teaching or your theorizing, be true to the inspirations of the divine mind.

God is yet working in the world, and he is to bring to pass a glory of which at present we have but the feeblest conception. Be not afraid of agitations. Be not afraid of excitements. Only see that they are agitations and excitements, not of the lower passions, but of the moral sentiments. Be not afraid that you will not be orthodox. Be God's, and then you will be orthodox. Whatever the churches may say, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Then, whether you measure more or less than the creeds call for, you will be sure to be on the right ground.

I call you to a larger Christian life; to a nobler Christian faith; and to one that shall augment to the end of your lives. I do not ask you to become a member of this sect, and wear our epaulets and our buttons and our stripes, and to go about boasting of our superiority over other sects. You are Christ's, I am Christ's, we are all Christ's, loved of Christians of every name, and loved of churches however imperfect; and if your lot be cast with others, work with them, and help them. Hinder none. Revile none. Quarrel with none. Take sides with the highest truth, with the highest morality, and with the most earnest justice and benevolence and purity. Take sides with God, and God will take care of you. And rising, at last, from this dismal morass, which we call life, you shall be admitted where there shall be no more discord, into the blessedness of the heavenly land. For those who are in the minority for Christ's sake on earth, shall, by the power of Christ, be in everlasting majority in the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU, O God, art in heaven; and yet everywhere thou art present. Thou dwellest in the land of spirits, and we are incased in the body; and yet, thou dost vouchsafe thy help and thy care—the more because we are needy; for thou art gracious, slow to anger and plentiful in mercy. Thou rejoicest in good, and not in evil. Thou hast sanctified pain; and to those that are instructed thou hast redeemed suffering from being an ill. Thou dost grant unto us thy Son, our Savior, who was made a perfect Captain of our salvation by the things which he suffered. Thou hast called us to suffering, if we would follow him; and thou hast sanctified it, so that it no longer is poisonous, no longer quenches joy, but is only the darkness preceding the light, and the medicine that brings health. We thank thee that by pain and suffering the heart is deepened. We thank thee that thou dost open its chambers, and fill them full of power and life. We thank thee that the way of suffering is the way of victory and exaltation and joys supreme, which by and by none shall take, and no suffering shall quench. We pray, therefore, that we may be willing to follow thee in the way of trouble, that we may bear our burdens cheerfully that we may accept such cares as are brought upon us as the will of the Lord, and count ourselves thy pupils in the school where thou art disciplining us, and teaching us to be stronger, more manly, purer, more true, and more victorious in our conflicts. We pray that we may feel that we are evermore under thy watchful care, and that thou art giving nothing too much, and taking away nothing too much; that all things work together for good to them that love thee. Give us this solvent of all human trouble—thy love. May we have such steadfastness of adhesion to thee, may we so make ourselves thy followers, and thee our chief to whom we owe fealty and obedience, that every thing in life shall take its color from thee. And may we live as Christ's men. Living or dying, may we be the Lord's. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us, being exercised therein, wisdom to discern what is good, and what is right; what things are just, and what things are true. And in the perplexities of our conscience, in all our doubts and diffidence, grant, we pray thee, thine own Spirit, that ours may be quickened, and lifted so high that they shall look down upon these earthly questions, and solve them easily, out of a pure heart; out of a heart made lucid by communion with the Spirit of God. May we be able to sit in judgment on all human things. And grant, we beseech of thee, that we may have power to make the truth known to others—sweetly and blessedly to those that accept it, and, if it must needs be, with threat, yea and with a rod of iron, to those that are contumacious. Grant that thy truth may have free course to run and be glorified in all the world. We thank thee that the days draw near, and that the blessed work begun in thy time, and following through thine apostles', still speeds on. And though it passes in and out, as mighty battles, with various evolutions, so thou art at times hiding thy people in their conflict. Though they seem borne back and defeated, thou art pressing evermore, and continually, the enemy, and thou shalt give full and final victory to thy cause. The earth shall be saved. The race shall be regenerated—not merely the few that are scooped out by the Church; for the day shall come when thou wilt have the whole earth, and all its generations, at thy feet. Men shall be born to know the Lord, and shall grow up in holiness; and the law of purity and of wisdom and of rectitude shall govern men and nations. We rejoice to believe it; and though we shall not see it here, we work for it, and in the faith of it. And we believe that we shall see it from the heavenly land, working there still as here, in sympathy with thee, and rejoicing there as here in all that is good and noble.

And now, Lord, we pray that thou wilt teach us to be more wise in the administration of truth. Teach us how, here, at home and everywhere, to prove ourselves Christ's men in everything. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt prepare us for the events that are preparing for us. We ask not to know anything of to-morrow. Only give us thyself, and there can nothing befall us that shall not be good. Grant us thine own presence. Comfort us in solitude. Cheer us in despondency. And grant relief to all that are in affliction, and that shall walk in affliction and bereavement. Lift the light of thy countenance upon any that are drooping. Grant, we pray thee, that Christ may be all things to us, and to all of us; and in all emergencies. In every station of life, may we

have this open door, and this waiting Lord, and this ruling heart, and this omnipotent hand, to which we shall fly. Grant that thus living we may rejoice in thy work, and sing psalms of praise. And when we come to die, may it be with triumph; and may we rise to immortality. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless us in the word spoken. Grant that the truth as it is in Christ may become dear, unspeakably precious, to us. May we learn how to hear thy voice rather than men's. May we, by a sensitive conscience, grown more and more critically discerning by use, by culture in thy word, by prayer, and by fidelity to all our convictions, come to that power of conscience, and to that discernment, which shall interpret the way of God and the voice of God to us. Oh! that we might live for the whole world. Oh! that we might join ourselves to all men. Oh! that we might lift ourselves, blessed Savior, to thy side, and look down upon the world as thou didst when thou didst suffer for thine enemies, and all of them, and didst pour out thy blood to redeem the whole earth. Oh! where are our hatreds? How ashamed should we be of all our baser feelings! May we belong to thee, and to all thine, and to everything that is good, and just, and pure, and of good report.

And now, we pray that thou wilt bless us, pastor and people, in the temporary separation that is to follow. Grant, we pray thee, that our lives and our health may be precious in thy sight. But yet, do with us what seemeth good. To slay or to give life is equal mercy if it is thy will. If we are spared, may we come together again in due season, to take up the armor which we lay down; to resume the labor which we have sustained. And may this Church live, so long as it bears a pure testimony, and is a clear shining light—and we pray that that may be through many generations. We pray that this Church may be a continuous fountain of large, true, catholic, Christian faith. Spread abroad, we pray thee, the truest gospel everywhere; and fill the earth with thy glory. And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

CONSOLATIONS

OF THE

SUFFERING OF CHRIST.

"For the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."—2 Cor. I. 5.

"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."—Heb. II. 18.

This is one of the wells of consolation. The well on which Jesus sat at Sychar, and which the patriarch opened, remains there still. For thousands of years, without an hour's stinginess, it has given out freely of its water. The lips are countless that have sought it. The old, old Hebrews: the men of the ten tribes, before their dispersion; the Syrians, in their incursions; the Samaritans, in their time; the Crusaders; the wandering tribes of Bedouins; the Turks; the French; the pilgrims of every nation under Heaven—all these have been there, and taken refreshment from this well which the old patriarch opened. From its brink have gone up thanks from little children, and their over wearied mothers, from sweaty laborers, and sun-burnt travelers. How long and how large is the bounty of a single well like this in a thirsty land! Indeed, it rose upon the Psalmist as one of the traits of a very saint, that he opened a well. "Blessed is the man" "who, passing through the valley of Baca, maketh it a well." Isaiah spiritualizes the thought (and that brings us back to our text): "With joy shall ye draw waters out of other wells of salvation." These passages are *wells of salvation.*

Out of these wells a thousand times as many, perhaps, have drawn refreshment, as ever drew literal water from the well at Sychar. They are the wells in "the valley of Baca." They are full of that very water of which Jesus, sitting on the side of the well at Sychar, spoke to

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the woman of Samaria, saying that the water which he should give her should spring up ever-living, needing not to be drawn for the wants of every transient hour.

The first thought that withstands our appropriation of this declaration, both as it respects the consolation which we derive from the suffering of Christ, and the fact that in his temptation we are to find outlet for our own, is this question: *Can a Divine Being suffer?* I should rather put the question, Can one be a Divine Being in such a world, and over such a world as this, and *not* suffer? If we carve in our imagination a perfect God, with the idea that perfectness must be that which is relative to himself alone—that he must be perfect to himself in intelligence; perfect to himself in moral character; perfect to himself in beauty, and in transcendent elevation above all those vicissitudes and troubles which arise from imperfection—if thus we make our God, and in no way give him roots in humanity; in no way lead him to have sympathy with infirmity, then we have not a perfect God. We have a carved selfishness embellished. We have a being that cannot be Father to any thought that springs from the heart.

Is God a stone carved to beauty? Is he a dreamy optimist, who, seeing some far away end, cares nothing for all the steps—all the toils and troubles—which lead toward it? Is not God a God of sympathy, grieved with our griefs, pained at our sufferings, carrying our sins, and so carrying them that by his stripes we are healed?

A God that cannot suffer, and suffer in his Godship nature, can scarcely be presented to the human soul, in all its weaknesses and trials and wants, so that it shall be acceptable. We need a suffering God. It was the very ministration of Christ to develop that side of the Divine Being—the susceptibility of God to suffer through sympathy, as the instrument and channel of benevolence by which to rescue those that suffer through sin.

But, *could he be tempted of evil? and could he suffer in that relation?* Consider the history of Jesus, and let that be the answer. Recall to your mind through what portal he entered upon his public life—the grand temptation of the wilderness, where for forty days and forty nights he underwent inconceivable temptation. Consider the three years of life in society where he submitted himself to every one of those girds and attritions and thrusts which belong to every human experience, and where, surely, he was as susceptible of suffering temptation as we, and more, because the magnitude and bulk of his being was greater—for, as I shall show in a moment, the power of suffering is in the ratio of the magnitude of the being who suffers, and not in the occasion that offers. Consider that, as he entered his ministry through the portals of temptation, so he departed from it in the same

way. The mystery of Gethsemane is even more sublime and less penetrable than the mystery of the wilderness. Hence "in all points," it may be said, he was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

But how shall one think that Christ was "tempted *in all points* like as we are?" He never sinned, and therefore he never suffered remorse. We suffer remorse; and could Christ be said to be "tempted in *all* points like as we are" if he never knew remorse? He never sustained the relations which we sustain. He was neither husband nor father. He was mechanic; but he never was civil ruler nor candidate for position. Surely, the temptations which most severely gird men must have been unknown to him in such deprivation. Did he know all the anxieties which spring from the various relations of life without having sustained those relations?

But mark! All trials, springing from whatever cause, come back in our experience to some original faculty, and record themselves there; and if every faculty and attribute of Christ was proved to the uttermost, so that it may be truly said that no combination of circumstances can ever wring the conscience, or put to proof the reason, pride, love of praise, benevolence, or mercy, as these qualities have been proved in the Savior, does it need that he should have sustained all the different relationships which men sustain? Might he not have had every part of his nature put thoroughly to proof, and to a proof transcending any experience of ours, without having been obliged to go into the same places and circumstances which are known to our experience?

Men may lose money, one by having it burned, another by having it sunk in the ocean, and a third by having it stolen; but the loss of money is the same in every case, and the pang of loss is one, though the occasion and method of loss may be three.

An arm is made strong in one case by the anvil, in another case by the plow, in another instance by the oar, and in another by the gymnasium. And so when a feeling is made perfect, the training by which it is made so—that which tries it and puts it to proof—may be one thing, or another, or another. But if it be brought to its maximum proof, it makes no difference what the circumstance or occasion or cause is.

The point is this: that every single attribute which is tried in us was tried in Jesus Christ—the difference being, that when we are tried we are overmatched, and when he was tried he was "without sin."

But from this initial view rose up a larger one; namely, the divine nature of Christ, and the relations which that will have to his sympathetic knowledge of suffering; for I now, as I intimated that I should, remark, that the quality and extent of suffering depends not half so much on the exciting causes of it, as upon the nature of the faculty

which suffers. It is the power of suffering that is inherent in any faculty that measures suffering, and not the magnitude of the aggression which is made outwardly. For there are many who will stand up and have their name battered as if they were but a target almost without suffering, the nature and quality of the love of praise in them being such that it is not wounded nor hurt; while there are others to whom the slightest disparagement is like a poisoned arrow, and rankles with exquisite suffering. There be men who all their life-long walk under an arch that rains down abuse, and care nothing for it; and there are others who, if touched, as it were, but by the point of a needle, are inoculated with incurable agony. It is the quality of a faculty that determines how much one suffers by it.

A stroke of a pound weight upon a bell two inches in diameter, will give forth a certain amount of sound. Let the bell be of one hundred pounds weight, and the same stroke of one pound will more than quadruple the amount of aerial vibration. Let the bell be increased to a thousand pounds, and the same stroke will make the reverberations vaster, and cause them to roll yet further. Let it be a five or ten thousand pound weight bell, and that same stroke that made a tinkling on the small bell, makes a roar on this large one.

The very same quality that being struck in a small being produces a certain amount of susceptibility, being struck in a Being that is infinite, produces an infinitely greater experience; for feeling increases in the ratio of being. Where we begin lowest, in the animal kingdom, there is the least susceptibility; for feeling, or sensibility, goes with nerve; and nerve apparently comes in far from the beginning. But as it augments, and goes up in quality, the element of sensibility increases.

Doubtless the analogy goes on and up. Therefore the greater the being, the greater the effect of a given touch of trouble. The same suffering in a great nature is a thousand fold greater than it is in a small nature, because there is the vibration, as it were, of a mind so much greater, given to the suffering. We find, among ourselves, the same cause to produce varying results, according to the natures of different persons. There are some in whom an unkind word from one loved produces a greater amount of suffering than in others the death of a near friend would produce. There is a certain sort of conventional necessity for being overwhelmed at the death of a friend; but if we were to take statistics of hearts, I think we should find that there is every degree of suffering caused by bereavements which afflict men, according to the sensibility of those that suffer. There are thousands of men who are not much troubled because those whom they loved (as much as they could love anything) were taken from them

The death of a friend creates sadness in some. The sadness becomes painful for an hour or two in others. The pain increases in still others. It is anguish in others. It is overwhelming in still others. The intensity of the suffering is according to the magnitude of the suffering part. The same event, as we see it reflected in its influence upon human life, produces results along the scale of a faculty according to the magnitude and sensibility of that faculty.

Now, transfer these thoughts and illustrations to the divine nature. There is no experience among us that goes far, compared to the distance and route it travels, when judged by the divine and the infinite. The chord in our souls is short and stubborn. The chord in the divine soul is infinite; and its vibrations are immeasurably beyond any experience of our own. Sorrow in us is of the same kind as sorrow in God; and yet, as compared with the sorrow of God, human sorrow is but a mere puff. Love in us moves in no such circles as it does in God. In him it is never dimmed by any such glooms of fear, nor sullied by any such smoke of passions, as it is in us. It is not in Jesus, as in us, a mere household taper, burning when sheltered, and at that throwing its light less and less strongly the more the space is augmented. God is a sun, and his love goes out like sunlight, infinite, inexhaustible, not measured like a vintner's cup, to a precise quantity, but, without measure, ever flowing as the waters; unfathomable as the ocean; all-persuasive as the light and the heat. But if the offspring effects of love are universal and infinite, what must be the nature of that attribute which is capable of such results?

In the same way we might reason in respect to divine justice—its scope, its susceptibility, its power of receiving impressions, as well as of producing impressions; of the divine mercy; and of the divine indignation.

We see, then, how wonderful was the trial through which Christ passed. If it was a trial that is to be measured, not by the excitant, not by the occasion, but by the susceptibility of an infinitely sensitive divine nature, we cannot measure what the temptations of Christ were by simply looking upon the persons that tempted him. It was not that Satan tempted him: it was that God was tempted. It was not that one of his beloved disciples betrayed him: it was that the divine Heart was betrayed. Hunger in us; the not having where to lay one's head; the lonesomeness which men feel when they are consciously cut off from the sympathy of their fellows—these are no measures of the sufferings which Christ experienced from the same causes. The yearnings of an infinite heart, such as God's, cannot be measured by the slight and easily-cured yearnings of men. Our God is not greater than we by the things in which he differs from us, so much as by his sim

ilarities to us. He is like us; but that likeness goes on augmenting Love in God, for instance, is what love is in us; but that love which is in us a throb, in him augments to a volume inconceivable in our personality. Human nature, carried in one way, runs toward the animal and the earthy. Carried in the other way, it runs toward spirit—toward God. The divine Being is not some mysterious and glorious other Being, but an infinite and inconceivably perfect manhood of the same sort as ours. When we see him, we shall see him as he is, and shall see ourselves more clearly in him than we ever saw ourselves in ourselves.

All our traits have their original in God. He was tempted, and he suffered, under temptation, the same line of thought and feeling that we do—only without sin. But he was made a perfect Captain of our salvation. He was made to be, by the things which he suffered, just the One to go before us in imagination, in all trial and thrall, in all sorrows, in all burdens and cares, in all anxieties, yearnings and aspirations; because he knows what we suffer, having been tempted just as we are, the only difference being that he suffered more, and yet without sin.

Upon this basis I will make one or two points of application.

1. There can be no possible experience in the human soul which will not be perfectly interpreted to God out of his own heart. We are obliged to draw often upon our imagination; and at that we can scarcely enter into the sufferings of men. An avaricious man cannot possibly understand the sacrifice of an over-benevolent and conscientious man. An avaricious man reproaches himself, as he lays his head upon his pillow, that he was betrayed into the weakness of giving away to a beggar, on that day, some funds. Right over against him is a benevolent man who hardly quiets himself to sleep because he missed an opportunity of bestowing a charity, where, with a little more alacrity and a little more care, he might have had a chance of conferring happiness. These two men cannot understand each other; or, if they do, they must do it by imagination. The best men in this world are often times the poorest men to govern you. That is, they are men who are removed from the sphere of your sympathy, in that they scarcely can understand you. Such a man is so built that the reason predominates, and the moral sentiments predominate, and he has little of the animal nature, being slender of neck and small of basilar organization. But is he never tempted? It may be that to selfishness and avarice he is, but never to violence, never to theft, and never to deceit. His instincts run in moral directions; and when he looks, from his organization, high above all ordinary temptations, down on bull-headed men, fierce with blood, strong, wrestling with mighty temptations of

life, he can neither understand them nor believe there is anything for such men but damnation. Woe be to the man that is coarsely organized, and that has no mercy except that which he can find at the hands of a very finely organized man, who never had one of his thrusts of trouble or trial! A man who is open and generous cannot measure the contempt which he feels for a mean, stingy man. And yet, that mean and stingy man is a *man*. He has his sorrows and sufferings. He has immortality in him struggling to get free. For him Christ died. Poor as he is in the sight of men; unwelcome as he is in the way of friendship; little as he is before men, after all he has a Savior. A great Heart there is that suffered for him, and that now throbs for him.

Why, there are clean diseases and there are nasty diseases; but a good and true physician or surgeon takes the most disagreeable of all diseases just as quickly as the most agreeable. Yea, if they are mighty in threats, he takes them all the more readily, because the skill that can cure such awful diseases magnifies the man that wields it. And I sometimes think that this is the meaning of Christ, when he says that heaven is gladder of one bad man called back, than of all good men. It is a very easy thing to manage good men—comparatively it is easy; though it is hard enough to manage even them. But as where a man is most awfully sick, and given up by all, a physician steps in, and stands by him, and will not go forth till the plague is stayed, and the fountain is cleansed, and health comes back; so Christ, when he sees men that are low-browed, and low-headed, and low-thoughted, stands by their side, and calls manhood out of the grave of their being, as he called Lazarus out of the grave of his death. Oh! the salvation of such a man—how it redounds to the glory of God. There is encouragement in working among degraded men in the example of Christ, who began at the bottom and worked toward the top, instead of beginning at the top and working toward the bottom. He was born low, and of the poorest parents. More than that, he was born under the stigma of being illegitimate. Nothing can be lower than that. And from that point in the stable, he worked upward. And he was most found, in his ministrations, by the side of the harlot and the publican—by the side of those that society scoffed at; and the only men that called forth thunder from the lips of Jesus, were those who stood high in power and culture and refinement, but used these qualities only to be inhuman with them, and did not care for those below them. They were the men of whom he said, "Woe! woe!" as if the thunders of the coming judgment had already begun to sound in their ears.

There is no possible experience, then, of the lowest nature, that is not easily, familiarly known in the presence of God in Christ Jesus

Every man that has wallowed in bestiality; every man that has been subject to the temptations which belong to deceit and dishonesty; every man that has felt the fiery thrusts of the passions; every man that has experienced the envies and jealousies which come in the attritions of society; every man that has had great hopes turned to disappointment—every such man can go to Jesus, and say, "Lord, thou hast not sinned; but these feelings that are tried in me to the uttermost have been tried in thee;" and the response from heaven would be, "In that I have been tempted, I am able to succor those who are tempted." There is succor for every man who is tempted, no matter how low he may be. There are men who stand in the shadow of perdition; there are men who say they are tempted of the devil; there are men who, from the very beginning, count themselves unworthy of hope; and yet no temptation befalls a man that is so low, or so gross, or so brutal, that he cannot carry it into the presence of Christ, and say, "Oh, thou Tempted in All Points as I Am, help me;" for that is his name—*Tempted in All Points as I Am.*

Nothing is so exquisite in you, nothing is so multitudinous in you, nothing is so venomous and painful in you, in the way of moral temptations, that it has not had some part in the experience of Christ, so that it is interpreted to him perfectly. And every sigh, every groan, every aspiration, every thought, that will not even look up, but that, looking down, despairs—God knows them all, and knows them quick; for they bound, as it were, against his heart, bringing up suggestions of trials in his own self.

2. God looks upon all the trials of men, whether of sin, or of ordinary providence, as a parent looks upon a child's trials; as a physician looks upon a patient's symptoms; as a teacher looks upon a pupil's low inexperience.

We have been taught that God hates sin, and abhors sinners. We have been so taught that we could not avoid the inference that God was inaccessible to his creatures; that our God sat upon the summit of a cliff full five thousand feet sheer above us. To be sure, on one side there has been cut in the rock a straight and narrow way; but at the bottom are men that are without feet, men that are without hands, and men that are swollen with dropsies; and how shall they climb up that way? The inference of the teaching that we have had has too often been, "There is a God of mercy up there: if you will only go up this narrow shining way, and reach him, he will accept you." Ah! the tide is out, and at the base of the cliff there are hundreds who cannot go up; and if there is not a God to go down to them, there is no God for them. It is for the poor, it is for the weak, it is for the helpless, that we need a Savior. The strong can take care of themselves, relatively

speaking; but what shall become of those who are weak through stress of sin? What shall become of the poor and needy?

Brethren, we have a God that *seeks* men. You do not find him, but he finds you As a lamb is caught in the thorns and thickets, so men are caught in snares. And as one mired cannot go after relief, but must have relief come to him, so God searches for men that are snared. He goes out to find them. He is a Father. He is more than a Father—a God; for fatherhood is only one bright conception that sprang from the soul of God.

There is, therefore, no possible experience which one needs to cover up between himself and God. Shame tends to hide. We too often draw near to God with the more honorable class of our transgressions. Ah! it were better to be honest with ourselves, to be honest with our God, and to speak freely and plainly. For *naked and open are we before him with whom we have to do*, blessed be God! Therefore there is not one single wicked thing in you which has sprung up since you began to live a Christian life, that has surprised God in the least.

Persons sometimes think, "Ah! if that friend knew this he would not love me. I would not have it come to the ears of my patron, or defender, or friend, for anything. He would be disappointed. He took me to be high and noble; but if he found this out he would cast me off."

Now, there is nothing for God to find out about us. He knows all about you. When he took you, he took you knowing the uttermost. And you never will disappoint him by being worse than he thought you would be. You never will sin where he did not expect you to sin. Your guilt never will be greater than he made up his mind to bear with and pardon when he took you. He took you as a mother takes her child. She thanks God for it, though she knows it will be vain and proud and selfish, and that it will have all the evils of temper that belong to the race from which it comes. It is hers, and in spite of its faults she loves it with unspeakable love. And God clasps every soul that he once takes, and takes it for good or for bad. The wedding between the soul and God is one that knows no divorce, either here or hereafter.

"Let us, then, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." So says the apostle; and the basis of the exhortation is this: God knows it all. He has felt all that you feel. He has had the same trial of faculty that you have had. He sympathizes with you. He loves you. It is his delight to bring sons and daughters home to glory. He was himself made perfect that he might do that very work to which he invites you.

3. We see that there is a light thrown upon suffering of every kind

connected with Christ, as illustrating his feeling in the divine economy, and its moral government. We see that suffering is not that fuliginous, sulphurous thing which we have too often been accustomed to regard it. It is sometimes an infirmity, sometimes a misfortune, and sometimes a sin; but whichever it is, there is in it argument of patience. Christ suffered too. Arm yourselves, therefore. Hear him saying, "Ye in this world shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." Hear him saying, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Hear him saying, in our text, "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Is it sickness of body? Is it disappointment of outward support? Is it the overthrow of all your worldly expectations? Is it the bitter thrust of the child's disobedience? Is it bankruptcy of heart at the loss of one much beloved? Is it trouble occasioned by your own pride? Is it the irritableness of your passion? Is it some surprising sin that leaped out like a lion from ambush, and took you down? Is it backsliding along the soiled and slimy way of the passions? Is it any duty so great that you dare not assail it? What is the trouble or trial that you have? Is it greater than those troubles and trials that overshadowed Jesus? Is it possible for the fibre of your little soul, however much it may be tried, to suffer in any direction as Jesus Christ's great sounding soul suffered in that same direction? He has declared, "Because I have been a sufferer, right where you are, and was triumphant, I have power to give triumph to you."

Come boldly, then, to this suffering Savior. Make his sufferings argument of your consolation; and rejoice in this, that you are strong, because great is he that hath undertaken for you.

Great is Jesus, because he is God. Great is God, because he loves. Great is love, because it shall cleanse and redeem, and yet shall be sovereign, because *every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to the glory of God.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, O thou ascended Savior! and take hold upon thee with all our souls; for thou art to us very God. Whom have we in heaven but thee? All the thoughts which we frame into the Father's image are thoughts which we have borrowed of thee. All that which enkindles joy and hope in us, we have borrowed of thee. We come unto the Father by the thoughts which we have borrowed from thy life; by that character which thou hast framed before us; by all the sympathies which we have learned to love and call divine. All that we worship in the Father is but that which we see in thee. We rejoice that there is this unity. Though we cannot frame a knowledge of the Infinite: though we cannot understand the division of thy nature and being, when we draw near to thee in love, there is but the one, whether it be the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. To us all is Father, all is Savior, and all is Holy Ghost. And we rejoice that there is no perplexity when our hearts are filled with love and joy. We rejoice that when we rise into the air of our nobler feelings, and by faith commune with the invisible, all is harmonious. Only when we fall back into the fear and degradation and shadow of our passions, do we find doubt and uncertainty, and questions of difficulty multiplying on every hand. Grant that we may have that spiritual purity in which all doubts are resolved. Grant that we may fulfill the truth of thy declaration, "The pure in heart shall see God."

We pray, O Lord our God, that this day thou wilt shine upon us from out of thine heavenly height. Nay, stand among us, that it may be as Brother with brethren, and Friend with friends. For thou hast crossed the threshold of earthly homes. Thou hast made thyself dear among children, and among their parents. Thou knowest the world, and all its needs, whether they be of weakness or of strength; whether they be of wrong or of right. Thou knowest perfectly how to fit thyself to all the exigencies of life. We pray, therefore, that thou wilt draw near to us. Give us not alone the conception of thy divinity, overarching and filling with glory all the infinite space; but grant that we may see thee a God near at hand. Be Immanuel to us, to-day. God *in* us, and *with* us, as well as for us and about us: for we very much need thee. We need thee in all the way of life. What things are there that we can do without thee but things which are of the dust, and which go again to the dust? What pleasures are there that are not of thee but those which perish in the using?

Oh! grant that we may have to-day yearnings after such honor as man cannot give; after such treasure as cannot be found in this world; after such manhood as is not demanded among men. May we yearn to be the sons of God; to be the companions of Jesus Christ, both in his tribulation, and in the consolations of his sufferings. Grant that we may esteem ourselves better than the beasts which perish. Oh! give us that appetite, that celestial hunger, which the sons of God have. Satisfy the desire which thou dost excite. Lord, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that in all our troubles, whether they be the burdens of life, whether they be the incertitudes which come from limited thought or limited power of judgment, or whether they be the sharp temptations which come upon us, as arrows sent by the evil archer which strike and wound us sorely we may have thy presence; that we may have thee for a refuge; that we may have thee to rest our thoughts upon in the hour of weariness. For, as children away from home comfort themselves in the thought of father and mother, so we, while exiled from heaven, long to have the thought of thee so near and so dear to us that we can run home in imagination, and be no more exiled, but ever present with the Lord.

Grant, we beseech of thee, to all in thy presence, according to their several circumstances, that grace which they especially need. Grant confirmation to those that are as a reed shaken in the wind. Grant steadfastness to those that hitherto have been roving and drifting hither and thither. Grant that all those who are perplexed with doubt, and with trouble of mind thereby, may have that certainty which the witness of thy Spirit gives to them. Grant that those who have been bereaved, and are mourning under the strokes of thy hand, may be comforted by thy presence, and may see the wonders which thou art working under the vail of darkness and affliction.

Lord, we pray that we may not desire forever to be clusters because they are fair to the sight. May we be willing that the hand of the Lord should pluck us and crush us, that we may be as wine in his cup.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant to those who are restored from sickness, and are brought to the house of God, and around whose grateful minds this day swarm thoughts of gratitude and impulses of thanksgiving, access to thee. May they be able to pour out their souls before God, knowing that it is not little to him, though it be small in them. May they know that God gives value to the smallest gifts of true hearts, and makes them in his taking more than they were in their giving.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that thy presence may be with those who are yearning and longing for others; those whose hearts are burdened not for themselves: those who are suffering for others—for their clearance, for their ennobling, and for their confirmation in all hope and in all good. Walk with them; talk with them; fold them in thine arms, and in thine own bosom, that they may go forth as from the sanctuary, ready and strong again to bear their burdens.

Grant, we beseech of thee, thy blessing to rest upon all those who suffer from the stings of poverty, and misfortune, from persecution, from the annoyances and cares of the world, and all its venomous dust. We beseech of thee that they may be able to cast their cares and their burdens upon the Lord. There may they rest where there is everlasting strength; and may they be able, from day to day, to renew this blessed consecration, and take this strength, which is for them, and for all that need it. Though they cannot bear themselves up, may they have the wings of the Almighty to lift them; and so may they be carried even as the eagle carries its young.

Grant, we beseech of thee, O Lord, thy blessing to rest upon all the members of the different families that are represented in this Church. Bless the households. Bless the dear little children. Bless those that would fain stamp virtue and piety upon them in the early periods of their lives. Bless our Sabbath schools and our Bible classes. May both those that teach and those that are taught be taught in the higher class of God. And may the seeds of everlasting life be early sown, and bring forth fruit a hundred fold.

Bless, we beseech of thee, all that are strangers in our midst. Sanctify to them the errands and purposes of their lives. Follow their thoughts wherever they go. And may their very thoughts be a channel through which blessings shall be carried to those who are dear to them as their own lives.

Bless, we beseech of thee, all thy Churches, to-day, and all thy ministering servants. Bless thy cause, under every form. Bless schools and colleges and seminaries of learning. Bless the various channels of intelligence—papers and magazines that are sent forth as leaves for the healing of this nation. Grant that all influences may be for the furtherance of truth and piety and true spirituality. Let thy kingdom come to the suppression of war. Let superstition flee. Let all revolutions and shakings of the earth be for the advancement of thy final glory. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

TREASURE THAT CANNOT BE STOLEN.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."—MATT. VI. 19, 20.

The instinct of property is one which distinguishes between human beings and the members of the animal kingdom beneath them. There is the germ and rudiment of this disposition to store up property shown in some animals, in that they store up their food; but beside this there is no prevision in the animal kingdom to any considerable extent; there is no power of projecting thought into the future, and organizing the present in reference to some remote period.

This instinct of property seems to have been one of those faculties which generated the power of foresight, which is nearly connected with faith; so that it is remotely suggestive of, associated with, analogous to, a semi-moral quality.

The acquisition, organization, management and enjoyment of wealth, are, and have been, the grand stimulants of industrial life; and industrial life itself has been the foundation of morality; and morality is the only proper foundation of true spirituality.

Up to a certain point, then, the pursuit of wealth is made, by divine providence, a means of development and civilization. It plays a part in civil life which is not to be ignored, and certainly not to be denounced. Nor should we expect, if the word of God be truly his revelation, that he would beat down with his right hand those truths which he organizes and supervises with his left; or that he would say to men in the outward life, "Labor, save, organize," while at the same time he said, "Lay not up treasure upon earth."

Only to a limited degree, however, has business capacity, with the wealth which flows from it, power to civilize, and to ameliorate the human condition. It works up to a certain point well. If it stops there it is in coincidence with divine providence. If it attempt to go beyond that, it becomes discordant, and meets with spiritual opposition,

SUNDAY MORNING, Oct. 3, 1869.—LESSON: Matt. VI. 19-34. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 816 898. 907.

not simply in the great realm of cause and effect, but also in the realm of revealed spiritual truth.

As a lower part of God's economy, as among the early foundations and material elements, the desire for wealth, and all those means of procuring it which these desires inspire, are beneficial; but they must stop at the point where God designed that they should stop. Beyond that, other elements must come in. If carried beyond their proper bounds, they cause as much mischief as in their right degree they produce happiness and prosperity.

It is this truth, that *riches contribute to happiness*, which all the world has learned, but learned without degree of knowledge. It is a special truth, limited; but it has been taken for a generic truth, unlimited. There is a general impression that riches may make a man perfectly happy:—not that they always do, because men do not know how to use them; but that if men knew how to use them they would; that there is, somehow, and somewhere, locked up in them, the secret of universal happiness.

The other truth, that *riches alone can make no man happy*, has had expositors in every age. There have been some philosophical or moral teachers who have shown that mere property cannot build up manhood. And there are among men some who recognize this truth practically and thoroughly. Among us there are some. In the great roaring maelstrom over the way, there are a few. The best men that live on the continent live in New York, and Boston, and Philadelphia, and Washington. The nearer men live to hell, the better they are—if they are good! Their gilt is fire-burnt, and does not easily rub off. A man who, under severe and terrific and various temptation, is able to maintain a pure spiritual manhood; a man who has fought the battle of manhood, at the very jaws of perdition, and has been conqueror, and stands up as conqueror, is a better man than he who has had no experience and no battle at all to fight. Therefore I say that in Wall Street there are as good men as there are anywhere on the face of the globe. You shall find men there that have been tempered, disciplined, proved—and not found wanting. I do not think that they march in platoons and regiments; but there are some. And in every age there have been men who have gained wealth, and employed it, and yet known that it was but their servant. And never will it go higher than the pocket. Never will it go as high as the heart. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them," said the psalmist. There are men who know how to follow that injunction, and who do it. There are only a few, but there are a few, who are practically free from the illusion of the illimitable power of wealth for the production of happiness.

There are others who, under whip and spur of preaching, externally,

professionally, perfunctorily believe the same thing. There are a great many of you who will sit here, the banks being shut, and the stores being shut, and no business being transacted, and a better class of faculties being evoked, and operative, and will listen while sweet memories and a thousand tender associations are awakened in you, and I discourse to you upon the relations of wealth to the spiritual and social elements; and you will bow your head and believe what I say, for the time being, sincerely, but not potentially. As soon as you are fairly free from Sunday, you will be fairly free from the Sunday sermon, and fairly free from the effects of it. You not only will be free from it, but you will look back upon it as a pleasant song; as something sweet.

While the young man is in the gay circle in the evening, and stands in the charmed *coterie*, and the sweet sentiment is warbled from both the keys and the lips, it seems to him that nothing was ever more enchanting and more divine than that thin and slazy song, that touches every feeling in him. But to-morrow morning, when he girds himself for the day's duty, he feels, "I have that proud man, and this stern man, and these complicated difficulties to encounter, and I must buckle myself to the battle." And in the pauses and intervals of this tremendous daily struggle he thinks of that song of the evening before, and it seems to him like the merest illusion of the most evanishing dream. The idea that such a thing as that should be thought a matter worthy a man's attention seems absurd.

And that is about the category into which sermons go. On Sunday, sermons are of interest to us, very likely; but on Monday they are like a song that was sung, and that died on the ear in the utterance. And men ridicule on Monday things that they thought well of on Sunday. Where, for instance, a man has been fortunate, and made an uncommonly large deposit, his friend nudges him as they go along the street, and says, "I thought you understood yesterday that riches were dangerous!" "Dangerous?" says the man—"well, yes; but I like danger!" And the pleasant conversation and banter goes on. "The minister tells men that their riches bring care and vexation," says the man; "and yet, I think for half a million I would be willing to bear cares and vexations!" And so he dismisses it with a skeptical sneer of mirth. Another man says, "My minister told me yesterday that riches brought unhappiness; I think I should like to be made unhappy! I think a million's worth of unhappiness would do me good!" And so men talk about it. But not here. Not when the minister goes to see them—if he ever does go to see them—and talks with them. When, however, they get into the other sphere, the world sphere, and spiritual truth is seen, not in its proper light, but as it looks when men get into the dust and magnifying vapors of business,

then they change. The very men who on Sunday sentimentally thought there was danger in wealth, and that its delight was overesti mated, and that its power to produce soul-treasure was not so great as men supposed—those very men, on Monday, and on all the other days of the week, are of a different feeling.

Even good men have this mania—for it is a mania. It is a passion. It rises in men like an inflammation ; it ferments in men like leaven—and more and more, all the week, the further they get from Sunday. And they are amazed, when Sunday comes round again, to see how great a gulf they have to leap in order to stand where they stood last Sunday.

Thus, in certain moods, in their moments of excitement, in their lower moral states and ranges, men—even good men, who know better—come to have the feeling that is common to the great herd in the world; namely, that although riches, in some mysterious sense, are not adequate to all the wants of life, yet, taking one thing with another, there is no one way in which a man in this world can be so much a man, and make so much show, and gather so much happiness, and do so much good, as by being a rich man.

That one gate—broad is the road that leads to it. And vast are the portals. An iron gate, it is. Gold is within. And around about it are vast multitudes scrambling, fighting, and contesting each other, to see who shall first enter the kingdom of Mammon !

Now, the spirit of our Lord's teaching is not that it is wicked to seek wealth, or to be rich. The spirit of our Lord's teaching is theo logical and ideal, and is to be so construed. The Sermon on the Mount, in all its parts, holds up the whole and complete truth, the absolute and final form of the disclosure of truth. Christ does not say to us, therefore, that riches are useless, but that the sources of true and abiding happiness cannot be filled by men's riches alone. There is a treasure which is not subject to the fluctuations and dangers and temp tations of worldly wealth ; and our Master says, "Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth"—that is, distinctively, characteristically, as though they were the treasures of your life. He does not say that you shall not have an earthly treasure ; but exhorts you, in laying up your *ideal* treasure, not to let it be that worldly treasure which is subject to all the fluctuations of property. He says, "Lay up for yourselves another kind of treasure. Open other sources of supply which are higher and nobler. Lay up for yourselves treasures, primarily and distinctively, in heaven." In the context he says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." And, as evidence that he does not believe, and does not mean to teach us to believe, that prop erty, or the acquisition of it, is wicked, he adds, "All these things shall

be added unto you." It is therefore a question of supremacy, and priority and relative emphasis. Of the two courses, earthly and heavenly, which should a man mainly seek after?

What, then, are those treasures which we are to lay up in Heaven, and which are invulnerable? Look at the things that you call treasures, and see which of them you probably could lay up in Heaven. It surely cannot be money. That you cannot deposit there. It cannot be houses, and warehouses, and shops, and ships. There is no harbor for ships there. There is no place for goods nor for warehouses there. It cannot be bonds nor bills receivable. It cannot be any of the signs and symbols of wealth. None of these can be laid up in Heaven, because they all belong to an earthly state. You cannot carry your foot there, nor that which covers it. Both foot and sandal go to the dust alike. You cannot carry your hand there, nor the tool that your hand uses. You cannot carry your body there, nor the raiment that covers it. Both of these belong to dust, and dust is inexorable in its claims. You cannot carry there one single element of that which you intensely strive for, and strive for not without good reason, if your strife is restrained and limited by a higher truth, as I shall show. All those treasures which are distinctively known as treasures in this world, stop this side of heaven. It is in this sense that it is declared, that *we came naked into the world, and that naked we shall go out;* that *we brought nothing in, and can carry nothing out.* This is absolutely true in respect to property, and all aggrandizements. It is absolutely *not* true in respect to anything else. Because, we brought nothing into this world, but we carry a great deal out, of some things. We came in a mass of pulp: we came in a quantity of mere germs. We have fashioned these germs, we have developed them, we have pruned them, and trained them, and we are to carry out vast faculties, and voluminous characters. It is in a physical, but not in a spiritual sense, that we carry nothing out of this world.

Neither can we carry out of this life the ambition, the influence, and the power, that we have here, and that are eminent treasures. If you know no more than how to build, and you are famed and skilled as an architect or as a mechanic, that is very well; but, after all, it is in the lower sphere. There will be no houses for you to build in heaven. There will be no such cities there as there are here. And if you know only what belongs to the business of an architect or a mechanic, what chance will there be for you in the other life? A man whose business it is to sell fuel would have a poor trade in the great desert of Sahara, where there is nobody to buy, and where everything is red-hot the year round! It is a very poor business that a man will have in the other world who carries out nothing which has any relation

whatever to that world, and only that which has relation to this life. There may be a kind of ambition and influence that will go out with us; but that which is ordinarily called by these names—the baser coin or dross of ambition and influence that is scraped up in this life—happily that will all stop in this world. It will not go beyond the grave. Death is a strainer; and there are multitudes of things that men much value here which are rubbish at the mouth of the grave. They are not permitted to go through.

It must, then, be some such property or treasure as can pass the ordeal of death, that we are to lay up in heaven. It must be some treasure that we are to lay up, not by literal carriage or transfer; not by throwing it actually over.

We sometimes, living in one country, draw our funds and invest them in another. Men who fear a revolution in Germany have money in London and New York. Men who are afraid that some war or intestine convulsion will drive them out of France,—crowned heads, men of eminence, statesmen,—diffuse widely their property, so that if they ever become pilgrims they may not be poverty-stricken. They draw their funds and invest them elsewhere, so that if they are driven into exile they shall not be destitute.

We cannot do that with heavenly treasures literally. We cannot send forward any bills of exchange. If we are going to lay up treasures in heaven, we must have some way of laying them up in ourselves here, beforehand.

What, then, are those things which we can lay up: and what are those which we cannot? What can we carry through: and what can we not?

All the pleasures of sense will cease here. The ministry of the eye, for which God be thanked every day that we live; and the ministry of the ear—that avenue through which, oh! what noble songs and anthems have walked—are subordinate and low. The eye fades, and the ear grows deaf, and the tongue is palsied. All these faithful stewards of God's mercies to us are but for our earthly state, and they will end with death. And though we make our eye doubly sharp by scientific training, and though our ear becomes exquisite by the variation and combination of sound, these are after all earthly treasures. We cannot carry them through.

Nor are the pleasures or the treasures of the appetites to go beyond this life. They serve a wise purpose, and in a proper use they are subject-matters for gratitude to God. All physical enjoyment is right within due bounds. God meant the world to be a good world to man, and meant man to be happy in the world—not, perhaps, in this age, or the next age; but comprehensively, the generic creative idea was to

build a world fitted for men, and with conditions favorable to their happiness here. Why, there is a spring for it in every part of a man's nature, from his toe to his head, in and out, everywhere. God created the body royally, and foreshadowed in it what he would do for the higher part of man—the inward and spiritual nature.

As I have said, the treasure of ambition, and influence, and honor, and power, and distinction, all goes to the dust. Men walk as kings to the dust. They are beggars thereafter. They are stripped at the grave, and tumbled and rolled into the dirt. And the first and highest are the meanest and the last, often, the moment they step through the portal of death. They cannot carry these things beyond.

But how is it with the reason? Suppose we have stored that, built it amply, and made it sensitive to truth? Suppose we have so trained the reason, by conscience, that we abhor lies, and exaggerations as parts of lies? Suppose we have made ourselves not only sensitive to truth, but lovers of truth, so that our reason is, as it were, a mighty influence going abroad upon wings every whither, seeking to know the truth in men, on earth, in heaven, in God, everywhere? Knowledge will not necessarily pass through the grave, but the reason will. That will go on. It is a part of our immortality, and will enter the other world as we have trained it. If we have trained it so that it is bound hand and foot—crippled; if we have mutilated it; or if it has shrunk for want of use, it goes through just in that condition. Just as we have dealt with it, just as we have builded it, just as we have educated it, so we carry it on.

I do not think that a man, dying, carries all his affections into the other life. It may be a part of the pain of the world to come, that men go out and live still, in their bodily conditions, as they live here, and have all their intemperate and uproarious appetites upon them forever and forever; but I do not believe that the saintly throng carry with them into the other world those passions which make the waters of life turbid here. The instincts which were meant for the propagation of the race, and for the feeding of the propagated body; those lower and basilar appetites which evidently belong to the flesh, and which feed the flesh, and are suitable to the flesh—I do not believe that we are to have use for these forever and forever. The immortality of the soul lies in the upper range of the soul—not in those clamps and screws by which we are fastened down, as it were, to the hull of this ship in which we are sailing here. The feelings in the upper range grow broader, and are immortal, and the reason among them; and as we have trained the reason here, so it shall begin there. If it is royal in its new birth, it begins its new career royally; but if it is shriveled and shrunk, it begins its career accordingly. Every man that is con-

scientiously a lover of the truth, and is making his reason clearer, stronger, more comprehensive, less bound and limited by prejudices and passions, and less eaten by the rust of laziness—that man is laying up treasure for heaven; and in this sense, in heaven. He certainly is laying it up so that it will find its way there. And no young man that loves intelligence, no young maiden who loves to make her reason more resplendent than personal charms, will ever forget it or be sorry for it in the kingdom of heaven. That is something which goes on, and beyond this mortal sphere.

Suppose the soul is made rich here by a commerce of friendship in this life. It may be that there is much of friendship which is useful in its place; but which still is perishable: for friendship has a paper currency, which is symbolic of solid metal behind. There are a thousand things that we do incidentally, which tend to lubricate the way of life, and make it full of respects; but they belong really to this lower world. They are the circulating medium of friendship here. But it is true that they who purify friendship, who deepen it, who strengthen it; they who believe in the household, and all the sweet affinities of it; they who learn to love their fellow man, to live by their sympathies one with another, in their generosities, in trust, in the interchange of congeniality, and disinterestedness, and approval, and praise, and good will; they who, moving among men as in a vast bazaar, are perpetually interchanging the stores of love, and taste, and kindness, and friendship, who are polishing the links of friendship, and making them brighter and brighter all their life long—they may not carry into the other life precisely those ways and habits of interchange which are peculiar to our relations in this world: but those faculties which have been exercised in friendship, and have grown to it, and been educated to it, go up and are stored full of the seeds of everlasting happiness. Blessed were they here; but ah! the fruitions of this world are nothing to the harvests of single kernels which will wave a hundredfold in the other life.

Lay up a great deal in your hearts. It does not matter whether you lay up in your pocket or not; but see to it that the reason is stored full. See to it that the affections are educated, and widened, and deepened. Woe be to that man who uses his affections as a barter and a bribe for outward wealth that perishes! How many men there are who utterly desecrate their house and their household as an outfold, as it were. A mere place for eating and sleeping, a scouring house and bath-room, a mere dormitory, it is. It should be the gate of heaven. It should be the Lord's school. It should be a place of sweetness, of all delicacies and refinements, of all culture. And standing not far from the eternal shrine, there, in the household, whether it be hard, or whether it be easy, men should put their heart to school, that it may

learn how to be heavenly. And yet how many men there are who regard their house as only a place for rest and repair. It is to them just what an old engine house is at a railway station, where engines are shoved in and cleaned and oiled and repaired, and then shoved out upon the road again. Men make their houses just like a cleaning and repairing shop, instead of making them the Lord's school, and a place for laying up treasure in their higher sentiments.

He that is a good man at home is apt to be a good man abroad. No man could carry the sun in a dark lantern. It would drive itself out of it by the intensity of its light. A man whose heart is really radiant cannot help showing it everywhere—in the car, in the stage-coach, on the prairies, in the distant mine, or on the sea. Even a man that is sea-sick, if he is a true gentleman, is different from any body else; and if there is a greater test than that I do not know what it is!

There are insects that fly at night, phosphorescing light when they have a mind to, flashing and shutting up, like Christians that flash on Sunday, and shut up all the week, flying through the dust of business! Such are not our models.

I go into my garden, and collect a handful of fragrant leaves and blossoms—this leaf of geranium, and that leaf of sweet-scented verbena; this blossom of mignionette, and that blossom from yonder bush—and carrying them in my hand, in a thoughtful mood, and forgetful, (for forgetting and thinking are twin brothers,) at last I put them heedlessly in my pocket. They are now hid. I go into my house, and instantly the little prattler comes running about me, and says, "What you got?" "I have got nothing," I say. Presently my friends, coming around me, commence snuffling, and saying "You have a perfume about you." I cannot keep the secret. It will out. If I do not tell it, it will *smell* itself out. These fragrant leaves and blossoms that I carry concealed from view, send out fragrance so that everybody knows that I have some sweet-smelling substance about me.

A man who has really trained his heart in friendship and enriched his affections, so that he is generous and noble, cannot keep it secret. The fragrance of it will diffuse itself, whether he wants to have it or not. It will go wherever he goes, and make itself manifest

What is the reason that when you go into certain companies you take to some men? You say of one, "He was the homeliest man I ever saw, and yet, though I do not know him, there is something that draws me to him." There is such a thing as the elective affinity of a generous nature. Large-hearted men, loving men, trusting men, that beget trust, carrying themselves not closely, not secretively, but openly and frankly, cannot disguise themselves. Children know them, and

dogs know them. Dogs often are wiser than men; and they know whom to go to, and whom to avoid.

There is a natural language of every feeling. A man may be as good as any man on earth; but if he is proud, there is an element of coldness about him which strikes through. If a man is selfish, he may smile, but it will be like the glinting of the sun on an iceberg—bright, but oh! how cold! If a man be a true man, and he is warm and generous at the heart, and cultivated, and condescending as well, all among whom he goes will see it. He cannot hide it. Let a man develop his reason royally, and his affections nobly, and he will have treasures laid up in heaven. You may be sure of that.

There is another tendency of our nature which we think but little of, but which is vital, and that is aspiration. We are accustomed to say "Excelsior," in fun or not as the case may be; but, after all, that on which it is based is the principle of aspiration, which the Scripture calls *hope*, declaring that "we are saved by hope." In other words, it is that tendency of the mind by reason of which it is never contented to remain in a lower state, but always wants to go on to a higher one, and carry every quality up and make it larger and finer. It is that tendency which leads beings created in matter to work their way out of matter toward spirit, and, feeling the inspiration of their higher life, to work up thitherward all the time.

This principle of aspiration, which takes away vulgar content, or takes away a man's conceit of supposing that he knows enough, or is good enough, is eternal; and, in its relations to the future and to immortal happiness, is past all measuring. That principle we are to store full. We are to lay up treasures in this regard.

But then, there is that grand and inexhaustible treasure-house of love—love to God, and love to man. This love includes that beneficence, that sympathy, that elective affinity, by which you are led to do good to a man who is your inferior, because you esteem the qualities of excellence which you see in him as belonging to his being, independent of the quality of character.

This whole mood, which renders every creature that has sentient life something to you; which does not stop with men; which takes in the animal kingdom; which takes in everything that creeps and swims and flies; which takes in organized vitality throughout the world, and gives it importance to you; this noble out-pouring of a true divine nature, which seeks to bless, and which chiefly admires and loves that it may bestow benefaction—that is a treasure-house, Oh! how ample!

There is no hell for love, nor can there be. Not the right hand of divine omnipotence could make love miserable in hell, nor anywhere. There is but one place that love can dwell in, and that is heaven; and

heaven to love is everywhere. Where it is, is heaven; and where heaven is, is blessedness, and bliss.

Sometimes men say, "I have practised these virtues which you tell about; but I do not think they amount to anything." Did you suppose they did in Fulton Market? Was it your idea, when I told you that *godliness was profitable in all things*, that if you practiced the Christian virtues they would come back to you in the shape of coal, and quarters of beef, and revenues? If so, you are looking for treasures which can only be laid up in this world, instead of those treasures which preëminently are laid up in heaven; which make that part of your nature rich which is to live after death; which is essentially divine; in which immortality resides; which is in sympathy with God and God's great society of angels; and which is to be in sympathy with the spirits of just men made perfect, and in sympathy with all that is good and just in the time past and in the time to come on earth, and is to be in sympathy with all that is to make you wise and happy here, safe in dying, and rich beyond all estimate in the other world.

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt"—and it seems to me that never more than to-day was there a peculiar and ringing significancy in the other part of it—"where thieves do not break through nor steal." The world in which there are no thieves must be a heaven! "Live," says the spirit of inspiration, "for that kind of treasure; and while you are living here on earth, see that you live so that you will have it. If you have the other kind, it will not hurt you for this world, but *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*"

That is just what you will not do. Every man of you says, "First I am going to succeed and get to the top of my profession; and then, having secured all the outlets and inlets, I am going, in the tower of my strength, to be a Christian man. Let me get my riches first. Weakness must employ cunning. You cannot expect that a man, while he is struggling to get out of the water and on to the shore will practice a dancing master's paces. I intend to get wealth first; and then I intend to be a Christian man. When I have become rich I mean to be a good man.

There will not be any room left then. Men who seek first the kingdom of this world and its best excellency, when they come afterwards to seek the kingdom of glory, have no place to put it in.

And that is not the worst of it, my friends. You, except to a very limited extent, take the very best things that are in you as barter for the poor perishable things of this world. How many are there of you that so love the truth that, when you are brought to that point in which the glozing of a lie will avert the flash of disapprobation, do

not tell the vailing lie to cover your moment's suffering? You do not love the truth so much as you do your own miserable reputation. You do not love the truth above all price. You use it as a coin to buy a moment's exemption from pain. How many of you say, "Why yes, wealth is a thing to be desired, but I cannot pay out this treasure for it. My soul-treasure is worth more to me than any wealth is, or ever can be?" How many men go into the street with that feeling? There are some that have it; but how many? How many men are there who, when it comes to the doubtful conflict, to the heat of the battle, to the rush and roar; when it is "every man for himself," and "Save who can"—how many are there who then remember that truth, honor, justice, love, every one of them, is supreme, and has the image and superscription of God on it? How many men remember Calvary, how many men remember Gethsemane, in the mighty vortices of business? Jesus Christ, when all the world of darkness, with its surging influences swept about him, and his heart and soul sank, and he sweat, as it were, drops of blood, clung still to the sweet and spiritual purity of love, and would not, in the extremest hour, give up the sacrifice by which the world was to be redeemed. But how many of us, when our Gethsemane comes, will not sell Christ, and sell everything in us that he has created, and rub out the picture that he has been laboriously drawing on our souls for years and years? How many men are there that do not put their Master to an open shame when there comes to be a competition between the treasures of the upper soul, and the treasures of the lower nature?

I do not stand here to undervalue wealth; but I say that wealth is not worth the snap of your finger in comparison with some other things. Why, I could make you hiss and deride a man who would sell himself for money. I would paint the picture of one who had been a good man, and was left the protector of orphan children that were heirs of a great estate, and who, when the time came that he could do it without anybody's knowing it, slipped this estate into his own hands, and threw the blame upon some one else, making it appear, perhaps, that the man who left the estate left it carelessly. I would paint the picture of a man who, after going through a struggle in his mind, and weighing the matter, agreed to commit this deed, and sold his soul to Satan, and appropriated the property of these poor orphans, and left them dependent on the charity of the world. How would you hate and despise such a man! But *ye are the men!* Whenever you barter a principle for the sake of a little advantage in a bargain, you sell yourself for gold. Whenever you lie for the sake of an advantage, you sell yourself. Every time you take advantage of a man meanly, you sell yourself. Every time you betray honor and trust, you are a Judas. Every time

you varnish a man with smiles, and make him fair promises, that you may afterwards knock the feet from under his prosperity, you are the natural kindred of him who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. And, the world over, every time a man gives up a principle, a divine sentiment, a pure affection, for the sake of pitiable pelf, he is a traitor to God, and a traitor to that which God has redeemed by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ—his own soul. He sets himself against the kingdom of God. He is against himself, and against his Maker, and against the offers of holiness. Woe be to that man who takes the bribe and plays traitor!

Oh! that the children of content, who never sought an ambition of self, would rise up. There are men who have seen this great game and conflict of life go by them, and refused to mingle in it, except so far as they could consistently. There have been a great many men who have said in themselves, "I desire only my home, my wife, and my dear children. My home is my nest. I am happy there. I want enough to see that my family have every advantage needful to their true culture and development. Beyond that I do not ask for anything." These men have sought to do good. They have illumined the dark places. They have heard the charms of wealth, letting the sounds go in their ears and out, and pass by. They have said, "What is wealth good for except as an instrument of love and refinement? What can my soul profit if it gain the whole world and lose its own purity and its own self respect? There are multitudes of men that have lived so, that are living so, and that are living happily so. Oh! that I could have an arena, and oh! that I could march through that arena, of men who have sold everything that was noble for the sake of money, and ring them, and see how much music there is in them. Oh! that I could make one after another come up to the test.

Big bells are very apt to be poorly cast. I never heard of a bell that weighed a great many thousand pounds, which, first or last, did not break. And what a sound a big bell that is broken gives!

If you take these overgrown rich men, and ring them, how little happiness you find in them! And in how many instances is the old story revived, that *molten gold is poured down the throats of rich men's children!* How many children of men who have made money are miserable creatures, and die in the poor-house! Of how many rich men is it true, according to James, that *the rust of their gold and silver is a witness against them, and eats their flesh as if it were fire!* How many are there of them whose nights are turmoil, and whose days are grinding days! Not Samson, grinding in the prison-house, was more a slave than many a rich man grinding under the lash of avarice.

Rise up, widow, to say, "Though my needle is all that supports

me, I am happy from the morning till the evening." Yea, go and see her when sickness cuts off her little income, and she, though proud, must subsist upon the bread of charity, and hear her still declare that she is happy. Not far from here is such an one who for years and years has been dependent upon others for her support—a lady in the noblest sense of that term, full of refinement and graciousness and excellence; and yet, I would rather take her place and be borne in the arms of charity, than the place of the luckless millionaire of New York.

They that have soul-treasure—oh! how much are they to be envied over those who have made treasure by sacrificing everything in the soul.

Young men and maidens, I do not speak thus because it is my business to preach. It is not my *business* to preach. I do not preach because it is my business. I should preach, salary or no salary, big congregation or little congregation. I preach as birds sing, because I love to; because it is in me to do it. I do not come to you with professional airs, and false sanctities, and conventional methods. I come to you as a man to a man; as a brother to a brother. I come to you to speak God's truth, and to speak it to your consciences. And you know that there is no such happiness as that which grows out of a pure heart. You know that you are never so happy as when you live in a generous and noble mood. You know that it is the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," and no other peace. There is nothing else that can meet the exigencies and troubles of this world, when sorrows come, when bereavements open the grave, when losses shatter men's property, when a man's bright name goes into eclipse; and you know it. And will you barter away this treasure of the higher life, this soul-treasure, this treasure which, when it comes to the grave of death, is beyond challenge. The grave is God's bankrupt court, which clears a man of his property and his debts at the same time.

Down to the grave comes the millionaire. "How much are you worth?" says Death. "Men call me worth thirty millions." It is not enough to pay his ferriage! But he goes through; and when he has got through, his wealth having been taken from him, he is no bigger than a mosquito! There is hardly enough of him for a nucleus to start on in the next life.

Down goes another man, followed by throngs and trumpeting bands. He steps into the house of death. The throng is hushed. All his glory is gone. There is nothing left of him; for straight and narrow is the gate through which he has passed. His soul is so small that it had no difficulty in getting through; but he has nothing beyond.

Another man dies—perhaps a poor man. They sling his coffin—an old pine box, hardly stained—into a rude wagon without springs.

and get a nimble boy to drive him off, and he is buried in a remote corner among strangers. And nobody cares. His dying is not so much as the dropping out of a punctuation point from the sentence of life—and much less a letter or word. He draws near to the gate of Death, and Death rises to greet him. For Death is good to those who are fit to die. With open arms the pauper is taken. And oh! how wondrous now is his beauty! How now, as he passes into the other life, angels come flocking to him! How, now, the radiant vista opens before him! And how, in the center, rises He that is "Chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely," to say, "Welcome! welcome!" Is this some crowned prince? Is this some monarch's son? No; this is a pauper of this world. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

In these days of racket and confusion and excitement, men and brethren, do not forget your reason, do not forget your moral sense; do not forget the truths which your mother taught you; do not forget the truths which make the memory of home and of your venerable parents so serene and sweet to you. Remember this: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things—all other necessary things of life—food, raiment, and houses, "shall be added unto you."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O thou that hast borne the sin of the world, thou that art bearing its sorrow, thou that leadest thy people like a flock, hear our supplication, and draw near to us; for thou dost carry our burdens when we cast them upon thee. Thou dost forgive our sins, and heal our iniquities. Thou dost labor, not only to hold us back from evil, but to cure the poison of evil in us; and we draw near to thee as the Source of all good. Our life has its springs in thine. We are more truly allied to thee than to the beasts. Though we are clothed with the body, thou, too, hast had the human form; and though we are set upon by the temptations of the flesh, and by this world around about us, that seeks entrance through every avenue of sense, thou hast been tried in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and art able to succor them that are tempted, in that thou hast been thyself tempted. Thou hast made full proof of all that this world can do upon any. And there is no gale that can blow that hath not beaten upon thy sails. There is no darkness that can be darker than thy midnight. There is no sorrow that can throw waves higher than those that beat over thy defenceless head. Thou knowest, and hast taken the gauge, of all human affliction; and thou wert able to sustain it, and to carry it forward; for thou wert a man, and didst walk as a man, and feel as a man, and think as a man. Thou didst bear the load of this world's trouble and temptation and trial, and yet without flinching, without falling, without turning back, without sin; and thou art able now to succor all, since thou hast borne upward thine earthly nature again into the glory of the heavenly estate, uniting God and man, and showing us that we all are one, and that there is no wide gulf or separation between us—that we are of one household, one family, one likeness, and one nature. Thou hast there in thy high and heavenly estate still the sympathy which thou didst gather up among men upon the earth, and art the Savior. To thee may come every one. The crying child to thee may come, though struggling with inexperience. To thee may come age and its various burdens. Thou art with those that are busy in the battle of life; and thou art with those who sit over against Jerusalem at evening under the palm. Thou lovest to be in solitude, and thou lovest to be in the populous city. Thou art with thy people in the wilderness, and in the mart, and everywhere, and dost know all their feelings and trials, and art the Savior of all those that need thee, both as an example and as a sympathetic friend. Thou art a God of sympathy and love, long-suffering, and slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. And we rejoice in thee, and draw near to thee this morning, with the humble confidence, nay, with the boldness which love inspires. We lay our hands upon thee. Thou art ours. We lay our hands on thine heart, crowned with love, and we ar royal, and stand around about thee. More reason than had the angels who kept their first estate have we for gladness and gratitude. Rescued and reared up from degradation of sin, and built up into the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus, how wondrous shall be our song, and the realization of our experience in that heavenly land!

And now, we beseech of thee thou that didst guide thy people through the wilderness, that thou wouldst guide us. Let not our feet go astray. Let not our heart give way to unbelief. Let not the eternal verities fade out of our sight, and things that perish take their place. Grant, we pray thee, that the world may be subdued by faith, that we may have power given us to overcome everything, always, everywhere, not in our own strength, but in the all-conquering name of Jesus. Fight thou in our right hands. Stand thou sentinel in our hearts. Be the Captain of salvation in every conflict for us, that we may not separate ourselves from thee for one moment, but may dwell in the indivisible bond and kingdom of love, and be thine, as thou art ours, that thy victories may be thy glory, and our victories may be thine honor and thy joy.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt advance us step by step. May we have the testimony every year that we are growing nearer to the likeness of Christ. May we see some powers weakened, not by physical might, but by the strength of grace. May we see some acquisitions, and some victories. May we find richness added to some qualities, and a larger dominion given to others. May we be able to resist temptation with more facility, and walk everywhere with more manliness, and adorn the name and doctrine of Jesus Christ more and more to the very end.

Bless all the members of this Church. Bless the families that are represented in it, and all the dear children that belong to them. Be near to our Sabbath-schools and Bible classes. We pray that the superintendents and teachers and officers may be sanctified of God, and made able ministers of the word. We pray that thou wilt bless not only those that are in the Church, but those that are in any way connected with it. Bless all the region round about it. Bless all churches. Grant that their conspiring lights may shine as so many stars of glory in the vault of heaven, and that the whole earth may receive the power and the blessedness and the sweetness of the Gospel of Christ. Send abroad those that shall preach, more and more. Bless those who labor for the establishment of schools and academies and colleges. Bless those who diffuse sound and useful knowledge from day to day, and from week to week. Bless those who teach in poor and waste places, and among the neglected and outcast. May those who thus humble themselves into obscurity and contempt in imitation of their divine Master that they may raise up the lowest and make them wise unto salvation, have thy presence evermore with them; and in their hut and hovel may they find the light of God's countenance more than the light of the sun. And we pray that the leaven which they are infusing, the seeds of thought which they are implanting in dark minds, may have the power of the invisible and omnipotent resting upon them. And we pray that from the beginning to the end, from the foundation to the topmost stone, from side to side, around about, within and without, this nation may be seasoned and sanctified with the spirit of the living God. May truth, and justice, and purity, and love, be the bonds that shall hold us together. And we pray that thou wilt overturn ignorance, and destroy superstition, and take away cruelty, and avarice, and greed, and all our enemies, and all the enemies of mankind; and hasten the day of brotherhood in Christ Jesus, when all the world shall love, and Christ shall come to dwell a thousand years among us.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless us in the word which we have spoken. Prepare us to live better lives for the light of thy truth, and for its warmth. Deliver us from the temptations which are stronger than our will. Send thy providence, and the ministrations of thine angels, that we may be borne up, lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, bless those that are in distress, and those that are suddenly overwhelmed with disasters, and often disasters which their own infatuation and folly have brought upon them. May their suffering hearts have power from above, and have such strange lessons of God's mercy that they shall learn the better way out of their misfortunes in this world's rude experience.

O Lord God! have compassion upon souls, and teach us to have compassion upon souls. Pour thine own nature into ours, that we may live to make men better, and to be better ourselves; to make men happier, and to be happier ourselves. May we lay up treasures of happiness, and lay them up in that part of our nature which death cannot corrupt; which shall rise to immortality; that then, with practice, we may go on forever and forever as the sons of God.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen*

BEARING, BUT NOT OVERBORNE.

"And he, bearing his cross, went forth."—JOHN XIX., 17.

Any one, repairing to an art store, who should inquire for classic engravings, would be shown a line of what are called *the masters in engraving*—Durer, Raimondi, Bervic, Muller, and others. But if he should inquire for sacred subjects, rather than for engravings as such, he would have presented to him almost every scene in the life of Jesus which could be rendered pictorially. But above all, he would find a harvest of the specialty of suffering. In the mediæval religions, there was no other single feature that entered so disproportionately into the representations which were made of Christ, as the element of suffering. His victory, in the thought of those periods, was to be looked for in heaven; or on earth at the close of his life; but during the passage of his life sorrow upon sorrow.

Not only so, the line between the brief endurance and the enfeeblement was not well understood nor distinctly marked, by the mediæval Christian artist. To excite pity, and, through that sentiment, unbounded devotion, the Savior was represented in the most heart-rending experiences: and as it was far easier to study the effect of suffering from human subjects than to imagine how it would be borne by a divine soul in a human body, we see the weakness of human suffering in the thousands of pictures which discuss the divine suffering. The whole history of the trial and crucifixion, as the culmination of the suffering of Jesus, have been reproduced upon canvass until art has exhausted all possible variations.

A favorite point, as it might well have been expected, has been the going forth of Jesus bearing his cross. He had passed the awful midnight of Gethsemane; his arrest there; his indecent carriage to the city. The residue of the night was spent before the Jewish council, which had been convened, and were sitting up, waiting in expectancy of Judas' success. The excitement of his trial prevailed through all

SUNDAY MORNING, Oct. 10 1869.—LESSON: JOHN I. 1—18. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 660, 284, 770.

the succeeding day, before the Roman tribunal. All day and all night again he was tossed about like a flower rocked in a whirling wind. And then, the next forenoon, in his famished, over-wearied state, he was led forth. And he went forth bearing the cross.

Early art, seizing this point of time, represents Christ as erect, and even triumphant, carrying the cross as if he felt a renewal of power at its touch; but later art and artists—Domenichino, and Raphael, and others less spiritual, more sensuous, have shown us Christ bending under his cross, sometimes stumbled upon the knee, or the knee and the hand, and even lying at full length upon the ground, overborne by the cross, and outwardly conquered.

But is there anything to justify such a rendering as that? Mathew, Mark and Luke do not even mention that Christ bore his own cross at all. We should never have known that fact but for John. He simply mentions it, saying of it only as much as is in our text.

The movement began, it seems, from the judgment seat. The cross was laid upon him, and he went forth bearing it. Doubtless his step was so hindered that it was slow. But they were in hot haste to expedite the movement. They seized upon Simon, a Cyrenian, who chanced to be present, probably because he was a swart and burly fellow, and made him a porter, that Jesus, relieved of the load, might move with greater celerity. They were anxious for his blood.

Is it of any importance how art represents this scene? Yes. A picture once seen gives meaning to the Scripture, to all unreflective minds, ever after. Sacred art may be called the evangelist of the senses.

Consider the moral influence of the two different modes of pictorially representing Christ.

The earlier and more noble and genuine painters represented him, as I have said, erect, and almost triumphant, and moving with his cross upon his shoulder as if he had already triumphed over it. It is the cross upborne by the divine energy, and carried joyfully, as if to illustrate the apostles description—"Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Such language indicates loftiness, treading under foot, as a thing contemptible, and not worthy of notice, the shame, and suffering, and burden.

But theology lost the inexpressible sweetness of the evangelist—the simplicity which seems to have been the reflex of Christ's influence upon his own times in the Gospel. It became ascetic in the mediæval age. The Roman—that is, the Tuscan—gloom, spread through theology, and the sufferings of Christ began to fill the whole horizon. And now art began to fall unconsciously from Christ's divinity to the exhibition of that weakness which belonged to his body. His face lost serenity,

and became woe-struck. His form no longer elate became bent and prostrate, as if some mighty oak, uprooted by the gale, had fallen its full length along the ground. It was Christ, in later art, overborne, subdued, carried captive by trouble. True art represents Christ as *bearing his cross.* Later art represents Christ as *overborne by his cross.* There is a great deal of difference in these two ideas, whether in picture, or in moral influence.

In following the scriptural history, nothing is more striking than the air of assured victory which Christ carried with him even to the end. It is true that there were conflicts; but it is to be remarked that the conflicts under which Christ bowed down were hidden. They were conflicts of the soul along the line which separates the finite and the infinite. They were sufferings whose relations were not understood, and are not understood, but which "entered into that within the veil." They were of God, and to God.

But the outward life of Christ was everywhere one of calm triumph. Human life, and all its incidents, he met bravely, cheerfully, serenely. It is of transcendent interest to us to know, not that divine love bore its earthly lot weakly, and mourningly, and overborne, but that divine love enfleshed, and moving among men, was strong, that it had amplitude of willingness for the tasks that were incumbent upon it, and that it triumphed not merely at last, but all the way through life.

In short, in this glimpse which John gives us, and which we get, of the turbulent termination of Christ's shameful trial, what do we see? The Roman magistrate, conscious of having done an unjust thing, slinking back to his palace; the priests and rulers, in furious ecstacy congratulating each other, and hurrying forward the events; and the excited populace, fierce and truculent, roaring along the crowded street. Only one sweet and peaceful thing stands out on this lurid background. It is Christ himself. "And he," John says, "bearing his cross, went forth."

The whole world lay heavy upon that cross; but he bore it. Our sins and our troubles loaded the cross; but he bore it aloft. It was heavier than man may know; but love was stronger than all its weight. And this glimpse is the true epitome of Christ's life on earth, under every variation of experience, carrying himself in all the moods of a triumphant love.

I. Christ himself, first, and the apostles abundantly afterwards, employed the figure of the cross as the sign of moral struggle. It is a symbol of self-denial—of daily self-negation. If any man supposes that this world was made perfect in the sense that there was nothing more to be done—in the sense that it was a finished world, instead of a world always finishing itself; if anybody supposes that God created

man perfect in the sense that he would not be ages coming to himself, then he has mistaken both nature and scripture. The world was made on the idea of unfolding and growing—on the seed idea. As our Savior said, the kingdom of God is like a seed, which is so small that it scarcely can be seen, but which, when full grown, is so large that it is a refuge and covert to the birds and beasts. If any man has well considered this teaching of Christ, he must know that this world is a world where men are *coming* to themselves, and not where they have come to themselves. And in coming to ourselves, we begin low down—in the senses. We open from the senses, up into the social nature. And we go on through the social nature, up into the moral and spiritual nature. And that which opens first is strongest, and has the most influence. And we nourish it. The body and the senses carry the first power, and the most power. It is only by many tears and hard stripes that many learn to make the second stage, which is the development of the affections, the first stage being the natural development of the flesh and the body. And by still harder struggles and trials do men learn that there are feelings and tendencies in the nature that God has given us which are to be supreme over the affections and the senses. This is not revealed all at once. We *learn* to make domestic love stronger than our appetites; and we *learn* to make spiritual nobilities stronger than our affections, or passions, or selfish interests.

There is always at the point of learning a despot that does not want to be dethroned. When the child, a little animal, greedily seeking to eat, drink and warm itself, comes under the care of the parent, and is taught that it must not feed itself at the expense of its little brother, it is learning love. The parent says, "You must be generous, my child. Why! will not let poor little brother have anything?" and his great big stomach says, "No! I want it all myself." And the dormant tendency toward generosity and the social affections is to be stimulated and encouraged until the child learns that love is to be more generous, and that it is to be praised if it overcomes its own little sensuous instincts, and becomes kind, and so sacrifices itself. And by the time the child is six years old, he is ashamed to have the mother's eye turn upon him with rebuke, and say, "What! took that away from the little baby?" A little child six years old is just as much a pope as the pope in Rome; or just as much a despot as an emperor on his throne; and it is only the grace of God that uncrowns and dethrones us. Selfishness makes a man a despot, whether he be in the shop, or on the ship, or on the shore, or anywhere else. We all have selfishness and self-seeking; and we all learn to put them down in our bodily nature by the force of pure affection.

Father and mother stand in the place of God to the child, to teach

him how to take the feelings next above the lowest, and make the lowest mind them; and whenever the lower feelings have to mind the higher, there is the taking up of the cross. You take up the cross when you crucify your lower feelings, and make them give up, and bow down to your higher feelings.

And that which takes place in the nursery and in the household, goes on still higher. There come spiritual intuitions and spiritual nobilities dawning on the mind. And we have to go all the way through our life learning to make our lowest nature mind the next higher; and this the next higher, and so on, reducing them to control, so that the private shall be a private, and the lieutenant shall be a lieutenant, and the colonel shall be a colonel, and the general shall be a general, and God shall be Captain over all.

Human life is a perpetual series of developments; and every step of development is a development by which the natural passions roll unobstructed, and are omnipotent over everything that is good; or else it is a development by which we become good. And if we become good, we do it by a process of perpetual self-negation—that is, by refusing a lower range of faculties, and giving power to the next higher, from the lowest to the very top.

Listen to Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily* and follow me."

You do not follow Christ when you run after his name. You do follow Christ when you run after his example, his spirit, his nature. It is not a duty which you impose upon yourselves, as it were from the outside. In the nature of things, no man can follow the true spiritual Christ except by that very process by which he puts down the lower nature, not extinguishing it, but regulating it, and subordinating it by the superior claims and power of the higher.

There are wide variations of experience in this work. All crosses are not alike to all. If a man's pride is eminent, that which breaks it will be a severe cross to him; but if a man is not naturally strong in his self-esteem, then that same conjunction of circumstances or duty will not be a cross to him. Therefore crosses do not come to us in the same places. If a man's ear is as acute as Mozart's, and he sits patiently in meeting, and hears gross discords and hideous screechings all about him, and his ear suffers, and he says to himself, "My brethren here are doing as well as they can, and for their sake I will bear it," he is taking up his cross. The cross is laid upon his musical ear. But suppose a man says, "I do not know Yankee Doodle from Old Hundred; but still, I take up my cross and bear it?" He does not hear anything that hurts him. When the miser is called to face the contribution-box, and all the neighbors are looking at him, and he has to deny himself, and

he puts in his contribution, saying, inside, tearfully, "Good bye," it is a self-denial to him. But it is not a self-denial to a benevolent man, sitting by his side, who only regrets that he has so little to give, and says to himself, "If I had known that there was to be a contribution to-day I would not have changed my clothes!" The act is the same; but to one it is a self-denial, while to the other it is not, according to the stage in the battle between their lower and their higher nature. Self-denial comes in different spots in different persons. A thing which, when it happens to you, is hard to be borne, when it happens to your neighbor costs him no trial at all.

And yet, the best men, men in the most favorable places, the best educated men, and men that are surrounded by the most concordant influences, cannot escape. There is a cross for every living man.

Nay, the great fact of trouble is neither a mystery nor an evil in any sense that makes it disorganizing. Men wonder at the origin of evil. I know where its origin was. It originated with God. You might as well look at a steam engine, and say, "What could have been the origin of this vast machine?" Why the engineer's brain was. If God had meant men to be polished and varnished, like the vase for the shelf, he would have made them so. But he did not make them so. He made them in germs and seed-forms, and said to them, "Grow!" And growing is labor-pain; and you cannot get rid of it. It is a part of the condition of organized creation, that the work of going from a lower to a higher state is like a new-birth, with cries and pains both ways, to those that help, and those that are born. And every man on earth who lives in the spirit of God, and in accordance with the economy of God's grace, by which he is to shoot up from lower forms to higher ones, must have troubles, multiform, special and peculiar to himself.

To attempt, then, to shape our plans so as to be rid of trouble, and not to meet it, is all vain. If you go aside from one path where it seems to loom to another, you shall find that it is there before you. There is no such thing as living in this world except in one or two ways. If a man says, "Time and Sense, ye are my gods; I give my life to you; let me eat, drink, and be merry, for to morrow I die," then he may get along with comparatively little trouble, because he is not attempting to grow; because he is going the other way all the time. But, on the other hand, if a man attempts to grow wiser, and purer and more manly, and more noble, let him make up his mind that he has got to pay for these qualities.

Is the servant better than the Master? When Christ took man's natural lot, and threw about himself the garments of the flesh, and became subject to time, and place, and civil government, and society, it was not possible for him to develop through childhood to man-

hood—through the appointed term of his life—without undergoing struggle and trial and cross-bearing. And in the midst of these experiences he turns, and looks, and says, "I bear the cross. Are you any better than I am? If a man does not take up the cross and follow me, he is not worthy of me." He is not worthy of himself; and still less is he worthy of his great Prototype.

We are not to seek for trouble and pain as ascetics do. God uses suffering as a whetstone, to make men sharp with. After you have made your knife sharp, your whetstone has served the purpose for which it was intended. But the ascetics seemed to think that if the whetstone was good to make a man sharp, it was good to eat. And so they kept whetting till they ground off not only the edge, but the body of the blade.

Trouble, self-denial, pain, bring a man up to a certain point; and then their mission is ended. They have no vocation of benefit after that. Up to that point a man should not seek to avoid them, or evade them. Therefore, a man that lays out his plan of life, saying, "I seek here fortune; I mean to have good health and good wealth; I mean to have everything that is happy and pleasant and sweet; I mean to live so that after a little while I need not have the cares and burdens and trials of business; I am going to have a good time in this world"—a man that does that sets out to bastardize himself! I say it on the authority of God. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every one whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards." Now, I should not have dared to say that; but the Bible has a plain way of talking. There are men who have got their wealth, and have built their houses, and enshrined themselves in men's praise, their very houses seeming to pout out its colors, and say, "Have you seen him who lives in here?" And common men looking upon the door-plate, read the names—I will not spell the letters; but God, looking on these same door-plates, reads, "Bastards!" And there is a great brotherhood of them. He that reads by the outward eye, does not see half that is written in this world. The spirit reads one thing, and the flesh another.

That man who seeks to get rid of care, and live easy, and throw off all burdens, and have a good time to-day, without regard to to-morrow; that man who has no foresight, and no hindsight either, in his aim; that man who has no glorious manhood that he looks forward to; that man whose life is not beyond the river at all, but is all this side, "in green pastures," and "beside the still waters"—that man God has given his name, and he does not need any other baptism!

We are born to trouble. Trouble is God's schoolmaster in this world. They that undertake to play truant will be caught, if God loves them; and if he does not love them they will be blockheads and idiots, and come to eternal disgrace by and by!

Manhood is the most precious fruit of trouble. There is but one tree in this world that bears true, full manhood. You cannot go and take any tree and plant it at hazards, and get spitzenbergs from it. If you want spitzenbergs, you must plant a tree that will bear spitzenbergs; and if you want russets, you must plant a tree that bears russets. There is one tree, and only one, that bears true manhood; and if you want true manhood, you must have that tree. And that tree is *trouble*.

II. It is not enough that men should accept this badge of their Master. It is not enough that men should say, "I accept the cross; Christ bore it, and I will bear it." More than simply *bearing* the cross is necessary. As I intimated at the opening of this discourse, the *manner* of bearing it is almost as important as the fact of bearing it. Christ did not bear his cross crouchingly. He did not bow down and prostrate himself to the ground, giving us the sign or picture of utter weakness overcome. Christ went forth *bearing* his cross—not dragging it. And we are to *bear* our crosses. We are to bear them in such a way that men, looking upon us, shall have something to admire, and something to imitate. It is piteous to see what work men make bearing their crosses.

There are those that are instructed in the necessity of cross-bearing, who, that they may not be without a cross, make up little crosses, and are careful that they are made not only small, but of light timber. Their crosses are the hermit's shell, like the old pilgrim's scollop, which was worn on the shoulder.

There are many persons who bear the cross, by taking something that is heavy to other people, but is not heavy to them. And they make much account of it, and speak often of it, and have a repute for bearing the cross, and finally persuade themselves that they are really doing it. Why, there are men who live in the indulgence of every single want and every single taste; who are so amply provided with bounties that they have more than heart can wish; and who yet, feeling that they must bear the cross, select something that is a cross to somebody else, and bear it with affectation and ostentation. They carry a kind or fictitious cross, hoping that thereby they will win the promise. But my brethren, the cross which you bear must be a real cross, and not a made-up one. A make-believe cross will not help anybody.

There are crosses which are deceitfully borne. There are many persons who meet troubles and cares in a shirking way. They have, if I

may so say, the art of padding the shoulders, so that when the cross is laid upon them it looks as though it entered in and girded them, though the shoulders having been cotton-wooled, and it does not hurt them. They bear a cross which is not very heavy; but they have embellished it, and wound it round and round, so that it does not hurt. There are troubles which people should experience, but which they so handle without any moral benefit, that though they seem to other people to be troubles, after all when you come to look at them you find that the cross has been dealt deceitfully with.

Oh! the insincerity of people! If men were as insincere to their neighbors as they are to themselves, society would dissolve in uproar in twenty-four hours. If parents and children told lies to each other as everybody tells lies to himself; if there were foisted up before our minds as many false images outwardly as are presented to it inwardly, we could not stand it It is not possible for any man to form a conception of the self-deceptions which we practice upon ourselves. And no deception is more frequent than that by which we persuade ourselves that on the whole our lot is one of the hardest that ever was. Everybody wants people to think that his troubles are worse than anybody else's. Men's troubles—oh! they are peculiar! I never had anybody come to me with his troubles that he did not think they were peculiar. You know that *peculiar* means *personal*. The old saying in respect to a boil, is strikingly true in respect to all mental troubles. There is but one place where a man can bear a boil, and that is on his neighbor! The only place where a man can bear suffering is on somebody else. The love of that deceitfulness by which men make themselves appear to be sufferers and cross-bearers, is endless. The false representations on this subject in the sight of God, and in the eye of his law, are without number.

Many crosses there are which are dodged, or jumped. Men will not do anything which crosses the grain of their inclination. They are good, kind, obliging, generous, when things run with their worldly interests and their caprices; but they are unwilling to hold back a real strong wish of their own, for the sake of a higher good to themselves, or a benefaction to other men. There are many men that are not Christians who have a good reputation, who are very popular, who are very genial and good natured, and who in the neighborhood and in the household are more acceptable, and are better to live with, than many Christians who are a hundred times better than they are. Why, some of the hardest people in the world to live with are Christians, and *real* Christians. Many Christians who are making a greater effort in the sight of God for the future beauty of manliness than we are, we do not like, and cannot get along with. On the other hand, there are many

persons who, so long as things run with their nature, are so kind and genial and gentle that we say, "There is no need of their being born again;" and yet, the moment you come to a point where anything runs across their actual tendency, they revolt and rebound from the idea of sacrificing themselves. There is nothing on earth, and nothing in heaven, to a self-esteeming nature, so precious as self; and whatever will build up, whatever will augment, whatever will ennoble, self, in their esteem, they cannot give up. Yet, nobody can take up his cross without giving up self. And so, when crosses come men fall back upon their average good nature, and upon their reputation; and, though they touch the cross, they refuse to take it up and carry it.

We take up our crosses, frequently, not for a life, but for an hour; and yet our crosses should be to us like the armor of the ancient warrior, that was worn all the time in the presence of the enemy, or like clothing in modern society, that is forever upon us. We ought to carry our crosses till we are accustomed to them. Now we deal with our troubles (to change the name) by fits and starts. When the moral feelings swell in us, we have a "time," as the saying is, with some great grief or self-denial; but it is only for the hour, or for the day; it is for the Sunday, or the communion Sunday; it is for certain conjunctions of time, or days of remembrance. To take up a great trouble deliberately, and feel that it is heavy, and that it hurts, and feel a revulsion from it, and feel that you take it up because in this way you follow Christ, and bless your fellow men, and deliver yourself from the thrall and bondage of selfishness and pride—to take up a great trouble thus, and carry it every day, and all the time, is a very different thing.

We do not need to wait till we die before we see hell. I see persons in hell every day.

A great and pure and imaginative woman wakes out of the auroral dream of life to find that she is affianced to a brute beast, and that the things which she is the most sensitive to, are to him matters of rude vulgarity. She, yearning, spiritual, super-sensuous, lives for that which is essentially of God, and finds herself chained, night and day, to a swinish creature, that eats with eructating abundance, and drinks, and snores. And she is his servant—his *familiar* servant—ransacked and rummaged, everything desecrated, as if the swine had entered the house of God, and were running wild over the altar and the most sacred places. And to live so to-day and to-morrow; and to see her children, as they come up, perverted—all that is within her resents it. And yet, she is able to say, "Lord Jesus, it is thy will, and I take up this cross, and I will carry it, if it be thy will, all my life long. I will neither run from it, nor evade it, nor lay it down, if thou wilt only give me strength." God's angels camp round about such an one. God's heaven

above, if you could only see them, is full of radiant companions. Denied at the table, denied at the couch, denied in the realm of friendship, everything that her soul hungers for, God's bounty is but just above her head, and God's own sympathy is her's, and all God's angels in the air are waiting for her. She bears the cross, and continues to bear it. God's saints are not always those of the calendar. They are often those of the household.

Nor is it necessary that we should be ostentatious in our cross-bearing. There are many persons who consent to barter the matter. They will bear the cross provided they receive recognition and applause. This is what I should call *ostentatious* cross-bearing. As long as you can have friends to come in and say, every day, "Your lot is a very hard one; I wonder how you can bear it," you feel that it is worth one's while to have a cross to bear, for the sake of the sympathy and praise that it brings. And many persons, if you praise them enough, and all the time, saying, "Why, you do go a great way every Sunday, and you are deserving of very great credit for sitting down with those miserable, unwashed, unkempt, ruffian children, and running the risk of taking the itch and the small-pox, and I know not what. If I did it I should think I was a saint"—a very polite way of telling them that you think them to be saints! As long as persons can be praised in that way, and as long as they seem to have the crown of sonship while doing this dirty work, they may perhaps do it. But suppose nobody saw you, would you do it then? Suppose people did not believe it of you, when others told it? Nay, suppose they misconstrued it? Nay, suppose you found that injurious stories were circulated about you in respect to that work into which you were putting all your strength? Nay, suppose you found yourself buffeted and reviled? Do you think you would not revile again, and that you would say, "Lord Jesus, only be thou true to me, and I care not what all the world do. I will follow thee, and I will take up my cross, and count my life not dear to me. And I will do it for the sake of those who are outcast and who need me. As thou hast been a Savior to me, so I will be a savior to them?" Nay, can you go night after night to Christ, and say, "Lord, how can I enough thank thee for permitting me to do it? Where is my word of praise, that I am accounted worthy, not only to be called by thy name, but to suffer for thy sake?"

There are many persons who, having their cross put upon them, and not being at liberty to choose whether they will take it or not, drag it upon the ground. How many persons there are that go groaning, and grumbling, and repining, because they cannot get away from certain things!

I never feel the south wind, that I do not smell flowers. I never

feel the northeast wind that I do not smell storms. There are some who are gardenesque to me; and there are others that remind me of winds that blow across New Foundland, and bring fogs, dreary and dismal. They live in a perpetual cold sizzle of disappointment, disagreeable and complaining. Oh no! they do not mean to give up; they will not lay aside their cross; but alas! they are bearing that hated cross right through the mud, along the thoroughfare. The cross is a clog to them.

When I see animals with a clog tied to their fore leg, I know that they jump fences; and when I see Christians dragging a clog, I know that it is a hinderance put on them to keep them within bounds. And when I go and look at it, I find that it is the cross of Christ, which they have thrown to the ground, and which is soiled by being dragged in the mud. It is a hated thing to them, and they cannot get away from it. If they could they would gnaw off or cut the thong; but as they cannot, they still continue to drag it.

The Old Testament speaks of the bullock's being unaccustomed to the yoke, and resenting it. Christ takes the other side of the figure, and says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," "for my yoke is easy." When the bullock gets accustomed to the yoke, his neck is tough, and he does not feel it; and that yoke which was such an annoyance, and was so hard to bear, becomes perfectly easy to the neck. And that load which at first he flew from, after he is used to drawing loads is nothing at all to him. So that, not only is the *yoke easy*, but the *burden is light*. And men, when they are cross yoked, as it were, if they refuse the yoke, and are recreant, take it by the hardest; but if they submit to it, and from day to day wear it, it becomes, like the yoke to which the bullock is accustomed, an easy, and not a troublesome thing.

There are many persons (and this brings us back to the illustration with which we opened the subject) who are crushed by their cross. I was looking, last week, at some pictorial illlustrations of the life of Christ, and I was shocked at one in which he had fallen down his whole length upon the ground. The cross was bearing down upon him, and he was looking up with an expression which I do not care to describe. I felt the disgrace and ignominy of such a representation. That was not my Christ. My Christ was never crushed by his cross. He went forth *bearing* it. And although his disciples, when the cross is laid upon them, may for the moment find that it bends them down, yet he that has the cross lying on him long enough, will get such stimulus and strength that he will straighten himself up. And every true cross-bearer learns to carry his cross as if it was an ornament, rather than a burden, and finds, after a time, that it carries him. It gives more strength to him than he gives to it.

And yet, how many persons there are who scarcely attempt to carry the cross. It is thrown on them, and they sink down under it. And that they, when Christ comes to them to comfort them, should not be comforted, and that years should pass over their heads, and they should still be crushed, and overborne, is strange and culpable. What is there in this world that is worthy of such a sacrifice of manhood—especially in them that are called by such a Savior, and such a luminous example, and that have round about them so many stimulating influences? Shall grief be forever a tyrant? Shall sorrow forever usurp the attributes of the Almighty, and stand domineering over men as if the name of God were Sorrow? I marvel that there are not more victories. I marvel that there is not more glorying over the cross. I marvel that there are not more songs of victory sung. For there is no joy greater than that of grief overcome. Nothing is more joyous in this world than the song of one who has risen from a lower to a higher plane.

I saw this summer, what I have seen almost every summer, the door of a canary's cage left open; and out shot the canary. He knew, as many men do not, that it was better to live out of a cage than in one! Every now and then I heard him, all about the house, descanting on his liberty. There were snatches here and there, and warblings yonder. He preferred to have one week's liberty and then die, rather than have a whole summer in a cage—to the shame of that philosophy which used to teach that slaves ought to be content in slavery. Though the people in the house said of the escaped bird, "Where will the poor thing get his food?"—sure enough, he had never learned to provide itself with food; although they said, "Where will he shelter himself in the pelting rain?"—sure enough, he had never learned how to do that; yet the bird gloried in his liberty. Though he was exposed to dangers from which he was protected before; though his freedom would doubtless bring him to the cat's paw, or some form of death, yet he rejoiced. And I said, I would rather have a canary bird in a tree one single day, and the singing of that day, than to have a canary bird singing in a cage a whole year, because he could not help himself; because he had nothing else to do; because he had no life of conflict; because he was fed and watered, and had nothing to do but to get into a tub of water in the morning and wash himself, and get out again, and eat, and sing, and get in again, and wash again, and get out again, and eat, and sing all day, and all night if the light be burning, and hop up, first on one round, and then on another.

There are hundreds of people—grown men and women—who are trying to be poor, miserable, circumscribed birds in a cage, with nothing to do but hop about, and sing, and eat, and sing, and eat, and by and by die and go to glory. They will die, and go out like a puff-ball, rather!

The Master, who is the grand type of manhood—God in the flesh, God clothed in the person of Jesus Christ—represents to man true manhood; and if there be one thing true, it is this: that he never flinched from trouble. And when it came upon him, he did by it what the ocean does by storms—drank it up. All troubles seemed to sink into the vastness of his being. He bore our sorrows and our sins. They were a part of his cross. Multiform, ever-changing, and forever continuing, the cross rested upon his heart as well as upon his person; and he bore it, and bore it to the end. And he turns and says to us, "Because I live, ye shall live. I have overcome; ye shall overcome. Take up your cross daily, and follow me."

Christian brethren, if we are puffed up and conceited; if we have been deceiving ourselves in regard to the virtues which we possess, how such a line of thought as this ought to search us out like an officer, and bring us from our hiding places! How we ought to take a higher conception of manhood! How we ought to assume a nobler attitude, and say to sickness, "I am stronger than thou art;" and to bankruptcy and revolution of fortune, "I am stronger than you are!" If misconception comes, and armed foes are drawn like bows to send venomed arrows at your heart, say, "He bore it, and I can bear it; he was reviled, and I can endure being reviled." Say to the heaven, "Thou hast not, in all thy circuit, any missiles which if Christ be with me I cannot bear." Say to the earth, "There is not in all thy treasures any mischief that I cannot bear if only Christ be with me. I can do all things, Christ strengthening me."

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

We bring to thee these dear children, thou who art a Father, who hast breathed the paternal feeling into us, and who hast taught us to be children toward thee. We bring them with faith in thy love and care. When thou lovest us, thou lovest all that concerns us. When thou didst take us into thine own care and keeping, thou didst take our whole estate. The earth is thine, and all that belongs to it. The range of time, the economies of life, and all the influences that bear upon us, are thine. We, and our households, and all that relate to them, are dear to thee. And we come because we believe that thou dost love our little ones, and that thou wilt take them, in thy fatherly providence, and care for them.

And may those that thus have been brought into the house of the Lord, and into the midst of our brethren, become dear to us. Though we may not know them, may our prayers find them out. From day to day may we pray for one another. And as we pray for our own children, let us not forget, we beseech of thee, the children of those who are united with us in church fellowship. We beseech of thee that they may grow up in honor, and truth, and fidelity, and true devotion, and fervent piety; that they may be Christ's from the morning of their lives. Spare the lives of these little ones. Grant that they may grow up to be a comfort and a joy, and repay a thousand fold every tear and every care which is expended for them.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that all the children that have been aforetime consecrated here in holy baptism, may come up in remembrance before thee. Specially bless them, we beseech of thee And yet, bless not them alone. How many are the little wanderers that have no faithful parents. Oh! look upon the children everywhere, and bless them. Turn the hearts of the fathers unto their children, that they may be faithful to them. Grant that there may be none in this congregation who shall be seeking to find their way up to manhood, and shall find their path darkened by the shadow of their parents. Oh! that little children may be so illumined by Christ shining upon them, that they shall cast their reflected light backward upon their little ones, and show them the way and make it plain and easy.

O Lord, we beseech of thee that there may be none on whose consciences and hearts shall lie, in the last day the guilt of their children's destruction, to whom thou hast committed these unspeakable treasures: to whom thou hast given the privilege of holding in their arms Christ's little ones. Oh! grant that they may not be thrown away and wrecked by their parents. Give faith, give light, give love and purity and truth, to the parents, that they may impart them to their children.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the labors of thy servants in their households. May they be able to make them Christian households indeed. Oh! dear Savior, dwell with them, to make everything light, and everything easy, and everything beautiful, and everything pure and true. We beseech of thee that thou wilt fulfill thy promises to thy servants in their own hearts, and in their own households. Come to them Abide with them evermore.

And bless those that labor in our Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes, and those that go forth to other schools, and seek to save the outcast and wandering. Grant that the presence of Christ may be with them. May they walk as in a white cloud, the grace of God shining out of it to those to whom they come.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those that are growing up. We thank thee that so many are rising to fill the places of those that have gone before; that there are so many young men and young women who are being adorned with the unspeakably precious pearls and jewels of Christian grace. Grant, we pray thee, that they may walk in and out before men in the covenant of love, faithful, laborious, bearing their burdens, and performing the duty of the day as it is allotted to them in thy providence.

And be present with those who are now bearing the burden and heat of the day. Make them strong to stand up as pillars built on thee. And may they be able to be built upon, strengthened with all strength in God.

* Immediately following the baptism of children.

And we pray that thou wilt be with those who are passing from the stage; whose heads are whitened; who are seeing their last years, if not their last days. May they be able to grow mellow and rich as their end approaches. May they be able to carry about them, in their later life, the glory and beauty of a true faith.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon this Church, and all its labors of every kind; and upon all the Churches of this city and the great city adjoining. Purify thy Churches. Purify the community. Unite thy Christian servants in confidence and labors of love. And grant that in all the earth there may be, in thy Church universal, inspired a holier faith and zeal than ever existed before. And as iniquity and doubt and unbelief come in like a flood, oh Lord God! raise up again the banners of faith, and again call forth thy people with a new resurrection, and lead thine armed hosts to victory.

We commend ourselves to thee through all our lives, praying that thou wilt take care of us on the Sabbath, and on the week-day, and in the sanctuary, and at home, and on the sea, and everywhere. And when we walk in the wilderness of the valley of the shadow of death, may we fear no evil. May thy rod and thy staff comfort us. And all the way may we find the signs and tokens of thy presence. And rejoicing may we march into the heavenly land, where we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word and the truth; and may we have ministered to us the act of accepting and appropriating to our special need, both the food and the medicine of thy truth. By thy Spirit wilt thou guide us into all truth; and by thy providence wilt thou discipline us. And may thy Spirit work through thy providence, that all things may work together for our good. May we not count those things good which only give pleasure. May we know that good lies in pain, in suffering, in patience, in self-denial. May we follow the steps of Him who sweat drops of blood. May we follow the Christ who bore his cross, and could bear it, to the end, enduring that we might be saved. And at last, when we have passed through the discipline of this lower school, bring us into the liberty of the upper and boundless realm, where we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit *Amen.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."—Acts XIX. 6.

This is a history developing one of the higher ranges of truth, which is peculiar to the New Testament, and which is its most precious feature.

I often think that the New Testament is like a mansion built on high ground, in a region of magnificent scenery, whose windows open on every side upon views of transcendent interest. Although the mansion itself is comfortably furnished within, and pleasing, yet memorable is it chiefly for what one sees outside of it, and through its windows.

The New Testament is a book full of precepts of wisdom for this life; it is full of secular wisdom: it has in it promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come: the mansion is handsomely furnished within: but its chief merits, its peculiar characteristics, are the openings which it makes into the spiritual and invisible world. The windows of the New Testament are more important than the furniture that is within it.

It is precisely at this point, however, that modern rationalism and all that skepticism which flows from it attempt to do away with that which is the very glory of the whole—namely, its supersensuousness, and its revelation of spiritual divine truth. By *rationalism* I mean the spirit of the intellect, inspired by the material world and human society, and by nothing else. The highest range of the intellect, is this same intellect acting according to its own laws, but under the stimulus of the divine mind.

Modern scientific investigations, as far as they have gone, confine themselves to this world, as to a husk, or shell. We hold that the kernel of truth is its spiritual element. It is said, or thought, in regard to this, that if it has any existence, science has nothing to do with it. It is certain that science has had very little to do with it.

Sunday Morning, Oct. 17 1869.—Lesson: Acts II. 1-40. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 162, 597, 755.

The human understanding excited through the senses by secular, mundane truth alone, is rationalistic. It becomes spiritualistic, and truly manly, by just so much as, beyond lower and material excitements, it acts under the influence of a higher divine stimulus.

These rationalists (I speak not of them contemptuously; but because there must be some term to designate them by, and as this is that which they have selected for themselves, I employ it) go into the New Testament, too frequently, as we might imagine a set of jolly, roistering colliers, just out of the murky mines, to go into the aforesaid mansion—a great house, comely, and well furnished, but principally remarkable for its elevation, and for the magnificence of the prospects on every side to be seen out of its windows. These jolly blades, just out of the dirt, are to have a good time. And, taking possession of the mansion, they first bring up everything they can find in the cellar; and then they empty everything that is good in the kitchen; and then they ransack the cupboards and closets for all manner of delicacies, and spread the royal board bounteously. There are pictures all around the room; but "These old coveys are of no account to us," they say. It is very much as some men speak of the old patriarchs and prophets of the Bible, whom they think to be certain monsters, half-way historic. They laugh them to scorn. And so our revelers, in this imagined mansion, set aside all the pictures on the wall, and all the books in the library. And of the windows they say, "Shut them down!" Through one is seen a long valley far down along the river course, with every line of grace and every tint of beauty; and they say, "Shut down that window! There is an ugly draft from it." Through the next window may be seen the sea, into which the river runs, wide, out-spread, and everlasting in its music. "Shut down that window, and curtain it!" say they; "we want none of that." And so the mountain window, and the champaign window, one after the other, are shut down. And now they can eat and drink and have a good time! What would you think of the refinement of such *gentlemen?*

Rationalists go into the New Testament, and here are miracles; and they say, "Shut down that window!" Here are the gifts that came by the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost; and they say, "Shut down that window!" Here are visions, and there are angels; and they say, "Shut down both those windows!" Here is the doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and they say, "Shut down that ridiculous window!" Here is the truth of immortality; and they say, "Put a curtain over it! shut it up! What we want is a rational Bible." And to eat, drink and be clothed withal—that is their idea of rationality. Every point in the Bible that enlarges the possible sphere of human life; every point in the New Testament that leads a man to have a broader

conception of duty, loftier aspiration, and a hold upon things which are beyond the sensuous sight: all those great truths that make God near, eminent and powerful—of these they say, "They are probably superstitions, and doubtful anyhow: shut down the window!" And so, when they have got through with the New Testament, it is like a jail, and they are like prisoners.

I like these brave rationalists! They are the men that say, "Oh! give us the precepts of the New Testament; but as to the machinery of religion," their thought is, "it may be all right, or it may not." They are precisely like a man who says, "Give me apples; but I hate apple-trees." As though he could get fruit without anything for it to grow on! They are like a man who says, "I believe in tallow, but not in the flame that is on the top of the candle." What is a candle worth that is not lit, and where no account is made of the flame? These men pretend to believe in the fruit of the New Testament—in its *precepts*, its *morality*, its *beautiful examples*, as they are called; but that very power, that very machinery, that very marrow, out of which all these things come, they officiously set aside.

I believe in them most thoroughly. I would not spend my life in interpreting the New Testament, and preaching from it, if I thought it was nothing but a book of common maxims and mere human secular morals.

Our text brings to view a memorable truth of transcendent value—one of the higher truths: namely, the existence of a universal divine Spirit, in its special relation to the human understanding and the human soul. We are too apt to discuss the question of eternity as a question of divinity: and we are always stumbling at that. We do not know enough to frame the logic of eternity. If we accept it at all, we must accept it purely and merely as a fact, and never as a philosophy. We have no means of framing a philosophy on a circuit so wide and vast as that. It is ten thousand times more important that we should understand the questions of the divine nature in their relations to us, in their relations to our intercourse with each other, and in their relations to our education in spiritual things, than in their relations to the future and universal moral government of God.

It is this that I shall attempt to speak of, in familiar language, this morning—the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit. It is this which is revealed in the passage which I have selected for my text. I will read the context:

"It came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts of Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

It brings to mind the case of the disciples and the apostles under

the command of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as recorded in the 24th of Luke:

"And behold, I sent the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.'

The disciples, at the death of Christ, had their natural reason; they had all the knowledge which had been reaped through three year's residence with Christ; but they needed something besides; they needed something to stir up, enlarge and empower their natural faculties; and they were told to wait for that something until it descended upon them in Jerusalem. What that waiting was for is to be seen clearly in the account which I have read this morning, of the scenes on the day of Pentecost. That day naturally has made its impression upon men through their senses. They have been accustomed to regard it with great interest on account of the results which it produced. But to me, the causes of those results are far more important matters of consideration.

It is the lapse of the divine spirit that gives character to the transactions of that day, and to the whole imperial history For it seems that at a certain point, at a given step of preparation, not only was there the descent of the Holy Ghost, as an invisible influence, but it pleased God to accompany it with outward signs or insignia. Forked flames, which they likened to tongues of fire, seemed to sit down upon the head of every one of the apostles. And the moment that took place, they were filled with a new, unaccustomed and extraordinary power. They were endowed with the ability to speak in languages which they never before had spoken in. They were endowed with wisdom that they never had before. And all the knowledge they had seems to have been infused, and to have become crystalline in them; and they showed the evidences of a certain imparted omnipotence.

When this began to take place, the men who believed in only what they could see and handle, accounted for it by saying that the men were drunk. But Peter said, "No, it is only nine o'clock; and men do not get drunk as early as that." They had not the benefit of our modern inventions, or they might have got drunk a great deal earlier than that; but it took time to become intoxicated by drinking oriental wines. Men were not accustomed to get drunk at so early an hour in the day, Peter argued; and the argument was conclusive to them. They saw that these phenomena could not be accounted for on the ground of drunkenness. "This," says Peter, "is that which was prophesied. All your Old Testament Scriptures, in which you believe, have been declaring that the time should come when there should be a revelation of extraordinary divine power; that the time should come when the human mind should be inspired to rise up into a lati-

tude but little known before. Here and there a prophet has arisen heretofore; but by-and-by prophesying shall be general, and a part of the universal economy. On your sons and your handmaidens (for in the Jewish economy men and women always ranked alike. Of all oriental nations, they, almost alone, saw but little distinction between the sexes—and none when either the one or the other were called of God and endowed to do any work for the welfare of society, or mankind):—on your sons and handmaidens this Spirit shall descend. So says your prophet Joel." Peter quoted that; and then said, "This is the fulfillment of that declaration." It is the disclosure, in the new dispensation of Jesus Christ, of the divine influence universal—an inspiration that shall lift the whole human soul up into a higher range of thought, of life and of power.

I. The divine Being is not merely a person, superlative, infinite, who sits enshrined, and, as it were, hidden in the centre of his vast domain. We are taught that there is an effluence of spirit-power, and that the Holy Spirit pervades the universe. It is to the personality of God what the light and heat of the sun are to the sun itself. For, though the sun is in a definite sphere and position, and has its own globular mass, yet it is felt through myriads and myriads of leagues of space, and is therefore present by its effects and power. And though God is not present, and heaven is the place where he dwells, yet the divine influence pervades the universe. The mental power, the thought power, the spirit power, of the divine mind impletes the rational universe.

This divine and universal effluence is the peculiar element in which the soul of man was destined to live, and find its inspiration, and its true food. For although we find man first in this world, and he receives his first food here because he begins at a low point, yet as he develops, and goes up step by step, higher faculties, requiring a higher kind of stimulus or food, are developed, and he reaches manhood at that point in which he begins to act from the influences that are divine and spiritual, and that flow directly from God. Up to that point he lives as an animal, and beyond that point as a man.

This divine Spirit; or, if I may so say, the diffusive mind of God which pervades all the realms of intelligent beings, and which is the atmosphere that the soul is to breathe—the medium of its light, the stimulus of its life—acts in the first place as a general excitement. It develops the whole nature of a man by rousing it to life. We are familiar with the gradations of excitement.

We can gain some analogies from our ordinary experience. We are so made that our first experience of excitement comes from physical or material excitements. Food, drink, heat, cold, agents of vari-

ous kinds, on being applied to the body, or taken within it, develop nervous excitement. This nervous excitement goes on past mere sensational excitement, and becomes an excitement of the brain—of its passions, its reason and its affections. It is the lowest form of excitement. We very soon become familiar with the fact that men may be excited by other than mere physical *stimuli*. When men come to live one with another, they are excited. They are stimulated by each others' presence. We may call it "mesmerism," or "magnetism," or whatever we choose; but one thing is certain, that men excite each other in a general way. We know that men are powerfully excited by the affections which they exercise, and by the evidences of reason, and by reasonings. In other words, while we begin life under the influence of mere physical stimulants, we soon rise to a point where excitements are social and moral. They are not physical stimulants applied to a physical body, but they are invisible moral influences which act as excitements, and wake up the mind and the affections.

But still higher than this, as men develop, they find that they come to a region where there are stimulants in the form of æsthetic ideas and moral sentiments. Here is where artists live. Here is where philosophers live. Here is where geniuses live. The excitement of these men's lives is not from what they eat and drink, except in a lower way; nor is it from social influences They have risen so high that they have come under the stimulus of ideas and finer forms of beauty and sentiment.

By looking at this way in which excitements come in our actual experience, we are prepared beforehand for the teaching in the word of God, that above all sensuous excitements, and above all merely secular excitements, there is an imperial, insensuous and divine influence which is universally present, and eminently stimulating, and to which every human being may have access. It is soul-food. It is heart-life. It is the light and the life of the world. It is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost—namely, that as matter excites men, and men excite men, in the lower ranges, so man, lifted up far enough, meets God; and that the office of the divine nature is to pour round about men the natural stimulation and developing power which there is in the divine Being. As the sun rains light, so God's soul rains power quite independent of volition. There is a divine and special volitional influence, a divine and celestial ether, sent forth, in which men find themselves awake, and aroused, and prepared to develop, in ways of which I shall speak.

II. What is the result of this supernatural divine stimulus upon men's nature? It seems to act upon the sensuous and physical nature only indirectly, by acting upon the higher life. It is in general an awakening of the faculties. It fires men. It develops their latent

forces. We go all our life-long with iron in the soil under our feet, and do not know that it is hidden there; and we go all our life long carrying gold in the mountains of our souls, without knowing that it is there. We carry in us ranges of power that we know very little of.

And the divine Spirit, in so far as it acts upon the human soul, or is permitted to awaken it, develops its latent forces. It carries forward a man's nature, opening in it, often, faculties which have been absolutely dormant. There are many men who have eyes that they never opened, and that are capable of seeing truths which they never have seen. They are therefore called *blind*. And they begin to see only when the divine Spirit acts upon their souls; because there are certain faculties which will not act except when they are brought under the divine influence. Then it is that those faculties begin life, as it were. There are whole ranges of faculties which have been developed only on the earth side. Men have a spiritual intuition; but that has never been developed.

It is, however, still beyond this that, looking at it in a purely psychological point of view, the divine Spirit seems to act on the human mind, by imparting to it fineness of susceptibility and moral sympathy, by which the soul is brought into immediate conscious and personal communion with God, and from which the most illustrious results of man's history are deduced.

Here, then, it seems to me, is the simple doctrine of the Holy Ghost, stated in brief—namely, that it is the influence of the divine mind, of the whole being of God, as it were, sent down into the realm of rational creatures, hovering above them as a stimulating atmosphere, and as food for the soul; and that when men rise into this atmosphere which is the nature of God diffused in the world, they come to a higher condition of faculties. They find faculties opened in them which they never before used. They receive in all their higher nature a fineness, an intuitional power, a moral perceptive force, which they never had before. They find, in short, that whereas their heart was like a tree in the far north, which, although it could blossom a little could never ripen its fruit, because the summer was so short, now their heart is like that same tree carried down toward the equator, where it brings its fruit to ripeness. The human soul ministered to by physical influences, gets up a certain way; ministered to by social influences it gets up another certain way; ministered to by the higher forms of human intelligence, it gets up still further; ministered to by philosophy and heroism it rises to a yet greater height; and higher than all of them, mightier than all of them, is the divine effluence.

Here comes the direct intercourse of man's heart with the great outlying, world-filling soul of God. And the moment the soul of man

comes under the real power of this divine nature, it is born again to itself. That is to say, all its powers have a new inspiration. As a man taking wine never knows how strong he is till he becomes almost drunk; as a man in battle has the power of ten men out of battle: so a man, when his soul comes under this divine influence, which the ancients used to call *intoxication*, receives such unexpected accessions of power, that he seems to himself to be equal to ten men. And there are phenomena connected with it of which I shall speak in the sequel.

There are several truths of great importance which will now seem more plain after this brief exposition.

1. The remarkable phenomena of the apostolic age, which have been reproduced in every age since, and which are now being developed here and there in abnormal and irregular ways in the lower sphere —namely, visions, second-sight, speaking with tongues, what is called "animal magnetism," various intuitional powers—are such as might be expected. We see society breaking out, every now and then, with developments of mentality which are unlike what are said to be "the ordinary sober, sound, scientific developments of mind." These things, in the forms of witchcraft, incantation, sorcery and possession, have appeared and reappeared in every age of the world: and there never was a time when they were so prevalent as in the time of our Master.

As you know, once in so many years, in the revolution of the stellar bodies, we come to a great meteoric year, in which it seems as though the heavens rained meteors night and day. And so in the revolution of moral elements, there seem to have come points of time in which there were devils rained down in showers, and men were possessed. Angels, also, seemed to be rained down from above. The whole air seemed full of sentient and super-sensuous intelligences, which were rained from all directions.

Now, we read in the New Testament Paul's directions to men who had no gifts. Some men had the gift of tongues; some the gift of miracles; some one thing, and some another. All sorts of gifts broke out under the preaching of the Gospel. And when the Apostles found a man that was without any such power, they said to him, "Why! what are you? A Christian, and cannot do anything? Have not you received the Holy Ghost?" In the case to which reference has already been made, the men said, "What is the Holy Ghost?" They seemed to think that it must be a garment to wear, or something to eat and drink. It was all that, only it was something for the soul to eat and drink and put on. And Paul said, "What were you baptised to, that you have not this gift?" And after they had expressed their ignorance of the Holy Ghost, he said, "Well, take Christ's baptism." And they took Christ's baptism; and that moment they flamed out.

Now what was it? They were illumined by the divine touch. Ah! that the laying on of hands since then could have been followed by such results! It has been like laying hands on a lump of lead, which remained lead when they were taken off. But when Paul laid his hands on men, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they that before could not speak, spoke in forty languages; and they that before could do nothing had the power of miracles in their hands.

Men say, "Oh! that belonged to the apostolic age;" but there have been sectaries in every succeeding period who seemed to have some such lower form of development. There is something of the kind in this age. Just now human society is full of it. It does not seem to me that these things are the gift of the Holy Spirit; but they do seem to show that there is a power of development in the human heart, in a given direction, by which it can do things far beyond what we have been accustomed to suppose.

It was in this direction that the early disciples were developed. They had powers which remained to them, but which for want of faith did not go on to others. I am not at all sure that miracles have ceased; though I think the object for which they were instituted has in a great measure, if not quite, passed away. I regard them merely as means of bringing convictions through the sense of wonder before men are strong enough to reason. They were therefore adapted to the childhood of the race. But under appropriate circumstances I know not why they may not be wrought yet. I see nothing in the human mind, and nothing in the economy of God in nature, and nothing in science, when science takes in the best part of the created universe, to prevent our believing that there are miracles to-day—to prevent our believing that men have visions, and see angels and infernal spirits. I see no reason why it belongs to the human mind to see these things by and-by. I believe that the human understanding will be so vitalized by this in-dwelling Spirit of God, that its faculties will be so stimulated and spiritualized, that the range through which men will think and feel will be removed far beyond the mere bound of matter. But at present these various developments that are constantly breaking out show what it is in the power of the mind to do or to be. It does not show that they are inspired again.

In the early ages, when these developments took place under the stimulating influence of the divine Spirit, they took place, as I have already intimated, precisely as we should have expected. When a child begins to come out of its little animalhood into its true selfhood, what does it do? Does it come out suddenly, like an insect that was a chrysalis yesterday, and is a perfect butterfly to-day? No, children do not burst forth in that way. They come out rude, half fashioned,

running along the line of development, tottling, prattling, making curious mistakes, glancing into manhood here, and stumbling back into animalhood there. And when the human mind was born it did the same thing. It ran along a line of development precisely analagous to that which I have just described. From the natural it flamed up into the supernatural, and came to its second childhood. And when in the apostolic age, it came under the more direct influence of the divine nature, it began to take a higher range, and a firmer hold of invisible things. It acted with just that irregularity which we should have expected, and which we see to day. I do not suppose it to be of God in any other sense than that in which everything is of God; but it shows on which side the soul is going to break out by-and-by, and take its flight. Its phenomena are abnormal—that is, unusual—that is, irregular—because there is no line of experience and no philosophy to guide them.

2. The experience of a soul which is lifted up into this atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, so as to be brought perfectly under the divine influence, interprets that figure of *marriage* which pervades the whole Bible. The rapture of true love in souls on earth at first finding themselves each other's; the glory and pride of finding one's self loved; the conscious swelling in us of another life mightier than we knew before being loved—this is the only experience that will at all shadow forth the communion of man's soul with God. It is the marriage of Spirit with Spirit.

Read, now, the 5th chapter of Ephesians, beginning at the 22d verse:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

I hear these passages quoted a good deal to show that wives ought to be subject to their husbands. I never hear persons say that a man ought to be to his wife such an one as the Lord Jesus Christ was to his church—such an one that by the amplitude and grandeur of his goodness, by the richness and gentleness of his soul, he should pour over the object of obedience such a divine and blessed light that whether she would or would not she could not help looking up and rejoicing, and adoring. As Christ loved the church, and loves the church, so, husbands, love your wives. And the next time you want to read a passage of Scripture on the duties of wives to husbands, begin at that! Then the apostle goes on to say:

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth

it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are all members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother [going back now to the other side of it], and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

And then he stops, and says:

"This is a great mystery." What? Wedding? No; "I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Here you see that underlying figure of marriage. And you will find, all through the prophets, and again in the teachings of the New Testament, that the marriage relation on earth is to be interpreted from the connection of God with the human soul. Then, on the other hand, the connection of God with the human soul is best to be interpreted and understood by selecting the very highest instances of blessings that come from the affiancing of two great natures on earth in wedlock, and transferring these symbols, infinitely enlarged and ennobled, to the nature of God himself.

You shall find, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, that this matter of the indwelling of God is treated as figure of speech. Human life is the fantasy, if there be one. The real thing is that divine life which is invisible. It is divine because it cannot be compassed within the bounds of matter and space so as to be seen. That must be a small thing in any universe which is able to wear an outward body, and to be limited by space and time. We live in the point of minimum; and all phenomena are minified in the flesh. When things become large, and high, and universal, and unconstrained by matter, they are invisible. When souls rise into the realms of the divine Spirit, they are associated with him. They are in actual communion with God, and God is in actual communion with them. So that to call men "Sons of God" is not a figure of speech.

We see, now, what is the full meaning of the terms, "Light," "Bread," and "Water," which are so bountifully employed by our Lord. We say that they are figures of speech, and that as bread supplies the body, so God's commerce supplies the soul. In one sense they *are* figures of speech; but the figure is the body. The superior truth is always illustrated by the inferior. And feeding the soul by staining it through with God's love, dropping gently upon it, as the darkest thunder clouds are stained through by roseate hues of light, and turned to glory; the coming down upon the soul of divine enthusiasms which throw their fiery sparks all through it, and kindle it with light and life and power; the coming of the influence of God's nature to the soul, brooding it, striking through it, and rousing it up—this is true soul-feeding. It is not like eating bread by taking it into the mouth.

When men come under the divine influence in this way, their life is said to be *hid*. Yes, it *is* hid: not simply eclipsed, as it is in sleep; but *hid*, by rising so much higher than the lower life, that the lower

life does not interpret it fairly. It has gone out of sight. Only in that sense is it hid.

The apostle Paul speaks of *living by faith.* "Christ liveth in me," he says in one place. In another place he speaks of his *life being hid with Christ in God.*

When one comes under the conscious influence of the divine Spirit, the soul lifts itself up with unwonted clearness, faith, joy, trust, effluence and liberty. What a bird was when it lay in its little round nest, an egg, compared with what it is when it sings in the dewy morning, near heaven's gate—that is the soul in the body compared with what it is in the joy of sweet and loving intercourse with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a life which comes to some by flashes. It is a life which comes to some by blessed dreams. There is a kind of spiritual haze which seems to befall some men, as there is an Indian summer which befalls the year; but there is also a true life. It is possible for the human soul to live in abundance and freedom and blessedness, so that it shall be forever at rest and at peace. Does not it sing? Yes. Is it perfect? No, no. There is no perfection without full growth. Does it keep the law? It may, or it may not. I believe it does not keep the law perfectly. And yet, I believe that the grace of God is so abounding, I believe that the nature of divine love is such, that when once the whole of a man's life is directed upward toward the bosom of God, minor discords are not noted. I do not believe in the old stiff, ledger-like account of a man's conduct, so that just so many sins are set down against him, and just so many virtues are set down to his credit. I believe the soul's life with God is like the child's life with the mother. Do you suppose, when a child has a great, true-hearted mother, that she keeps an account of all its imperfections? Do not you know that she pours over the child such a flood of love that, though its life is not perfect, though its whole being is imperfect, yet through sympathy and kindness and forgiveness, she accepts it with complacency as though it were perfect? And I believe the soul rises into such a communion with God that, though in its relations to time and space it may be subject to a thousand imperfections and discords, yet those imperfections and discords are overlooked and excused by God's great love.

When I walked one day on the top of Mount Washington (glorious day of memory! such another day I think I shall not experience till I stand on the battlements of the New Jerusalem) how I was discharged of all imperfection! The wide, far-spreading country which lay beneath me in beauteous light—how heavenly it looked! And I communed with God. I had sweet tokens that he loved me. My very being rose right up into his nature. I walked with him. And the cities far and near—New York, and all the cities and villages that

lay between it and me—with their thunder; the wranglings of human passions below me, were to me as if they were not. Standing, as I did, high above them, it seemed to me as though they did not exist. There were the attritions, and cruel grindings, and cries, and tears, and shocks of the human life below, but I was lifted up so high that they were nothing to me. The sounds died out, and I was lost with God. And the mountain-top was never so populous to me as when I was absolutely alone.

So it is with the soul that goes up into the bosom of Christ. There is a reach where the arrows of envy cannot strike you. There is a reach where not even your sins can annoy you. Your soul may so rise into the bosom of God that your personal self shall seem annihilated. What you are, you are by the grace of God. You may receive such an influx of the life of God that you shall seem to yourself perfect.

3. From this doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon one's self, we see what is the reason of certain phenomena which occur in our special lives. There have been times when the least cares and the least troubles oppressed you beyond endurance; when everything went wrong with you. There have been times when your sun has gone below the horizon. And no sooner is the Sun of Righteousness below the horizon, than all mists, and distemperatures, and miasmas, and unwholesome things, seem to gather about the human soul. Those days on which you have been the most temptable, the most unhappy, the least hopeful and courageous, have been the days when by your circumstances you have sunk out of the sphere and light of the Holy Spirit. And then it was that you could not bear your burdens. Then it was that you were tempted either to break your sword, or, like Saul, to fall on it and slay yourself. Then it was that you said, "All my life past has been nothing, and all my life to come will be vanity."

But you have had other times. You have had times when it seemed to you that you could sing. There have been times when there were songs in your house in the night. There have been times when death had no terror to you, and when your feet seemed to walk on the mountaintops, and you scorned the low places of the earth. There have been times when, under the influence of the divine Spirit, your soul was stimulated, and you walked in the higher ranges of Christian experience. There are days when you have no cares and burdens. There are days when you have eminent beatific visions. There are days when you feel that your soul is going on to greater and greater liberty all the time. There is no man that is more shackled and burdened than a man who attempts to live a Christian life by the natural use of his reason just below the inflammation of the Holy Ghost;

just below the the stimulating power of the Spirit of God. There is no life that is more fruitful, more bountiful of blessings every day, than a Christian life by which we live so near to God that we are perpetualy shot through with the divine influence, lifted up step by step, and blessed in overmeasure.

It is in this point of view that the experiences which are portrayed in hymns cease to be mere fancy-pictures. They are a part of the realm of Christian experience which is scarcely recognised by natural philosophers. It is unknown in science, and cannot be known by it. You know, I know, hundreds that are here know, what the man of wisdom in this world ignores and scorns; for there is no other fact so certain as the fact of positive consciousness of experience. You cannot tell me that I have not had victories over fear and trouble. You cannot tell me that when my babe, that was dearer to me than my own life, lay trembling and gasping in the twilight of death, and I stood and was able to say, "Take it, Lord," I did not feel it. You cannot tell me that, strong as was my love for children, for my own children, I did not have some mysterious power given to me by which I gave them up and smiled when they died. I know that I did. You may say, "Oh, well, it was the fantasy of the mind." Yes, it was *fantasy*, if that is the language which you choose to apply to the higher phenomena of the mind when brought into the presence and under the stimulation of God. I believed in God, and I felt him. I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I almost saw him. I believed in immortality. As a bird sings, now in this tree in my garden, and then in that, so my child sang, now in my nursery, and then in God's. It was not dead. It had simply flown to the summer-land. And will any man tell me that these experiences were not real? What do I care for the distances of planets. A knowledge of them is well enough for the outside; but I tell you, the true life in this world is the life that is going on in the soul of man. No man knows what he is until he has risen beyond the height of literature and social pleasure. No man knows what the soul is capable of being or feeling, what vast circuits it can make, what voluminous experiences it can have, what strange triumphs belong to it, or what endurances and victories it can achieve, until he is brought under the influence of God. These things are to be experimentally learned. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit." No man can know them who has not experienced them.

But we, Christian brethren, have had touches of a knowledge of them. We have had days of knowing them. And why should we not have more than that?

We are told that the divine Spirit is not given by measure, a little

now and then. The divine Spirit is not like some *aurora borealis* which comes for a night or two, and then skips weeks and months, and then comes again. The divine Spirit is like *light*, like *bread*, like *water*. These are the symbols which Jesus Christ has been pleased to give us, not simply on account of their use, but also on account of their endlessness and enduringness.

But, may every one rise into this high communion, and dwell with God's Spirit? Every one. Not every one alike in fruition, but every one according to his own nature. If you are a giant, you must drink like a giant; and if you are a pigmy, you must drink like a pigmy. And if a giant and a pigmy go down to a spring, if the little man's cup is large enough for him, it is nothing to him that the giant's cup is ten times as large. The giant drinks according to his size; and the little man drinks according to his size. And men rise according to their nature into this blessed effluence of God. Some there are, doubtless, who have larger conceptions and vaster experiences than others; and so it will be if every man is developed according to his own nature; but you are not stinted because other men are more comprehensive in their experience than you are. It is according to that universal provision which was made for all men.

Now, all Christians who are living in these lower states, are living below citizenship. They are living below the life to which they are called. They are living below the distinctive characteristics of a Christian life. That which is to make you apparently and confidently a Christian is your daily experience. Do not go to your books to find out whether you are a Christian or not. Do not go to the syllabus to look up evidences and ascertain whether or not you are a Christian. I never in my life read in books to find out whether I loved my father or not. I never went to a journal to see whether I was happy at home or not. And I do not have much respect for persons who are in doubt whether they are Christians or not. At the beginning they need some help; everybody needs some help to be born; but certainly, men that have lived years and years as Christians ought not to give themselves much anxious thought as to whether they are Christians or not. One thing is very certain, that if your wife should say to you, "My dear, I am exceedingly perplexed, and have been for weeks and months, in trying to find out whether I love you or not," you would say very quickly, "Well, I know!" There is such a victoriousness, there is such a fire, in love, that no man is ever in much doubt about it. And in regard to this matter, I do not mean to say that there are not babes in the Christian life. I do not mean to say that there are not bond-servants of the Lord. I believe there are many of you that are the Lord's hired men, and that work on wages; I believe that many of you

are the Lord's stewards and agents; but how many of you are the Lord's children, living at home? How many of you can say the Lord's Prayer, and appropriate it to yourselves? You think you can: but you stumble, and lie in heaps, at the first word—"Our Father." There are but few men that ever say right out, spontaneously, "Our Father."

You are not living in the best parts of your nature. You are yet in the realm of care. I know it by the scowl and wrinkle on your face. I know it by your bent back. I know it by the melancholy tone of your voice. I know it by the minor key in which you make your confessions. I know it by the want of triumph which you exhibit.

Where are the blossoming men? Where are the clustering, full-hanging men? Where are those men who show that summer has broken out of heaven and is resting on their heads? They are the men who are "the light of the world." They are God's dear children, risen out of the lower atmosphere and above the storm. They have left the thunder and the cloud beneath their feet, and are standing on the mountain-top in blessed transfiguration with the Lord.

May God give us grace to find this higher life, this inward life, this blessing of God on our spirit, by which we shall be lifted above the lower range of experience, and brought up into the communion of sons of God, and made heirs of immortality.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Draw near to us, O thou Son of Righteousness, and by thy light and warmth drive away those clouds and mists which obscure thee, and hide us in darkness. Reveal to us what we are Bring us into that blessed comprehension of thee which they have who are pure in heart, and which they may have who for the moment are lifted above life and all its various experiences by the power of the Holy Ghost. In thy life we shall see life. We rejoice that our whole life is of thee, and that our best life is hidden in thee, and that all this life merges toward thine, and that we ourselves are pilgrims going home, and that thou art waiting for us. Not content to make us joyful when we shall reach the gate of our Father's house, thou art sending down the road messenger after messenger; and we are met continually by these kind reminders of thy foresight, thy forecasting love thy providence and thy grace, which throng our steps with mercies. And all our life long we are blessed; and we are yet to be blessed in supereminence when we shall be at home and with thee.

We thank thee for all the mercies which have made *home* so dear a word to us. We thank thee for all the experiences one with another by which the word *love* interprets thee to our souls so royally, and makes thee the Chief among ten thousand, and the One altogether lovely. We thank thee for all the instruction which we have had in the sanctuary, and the great outer sanctuary of thy providence.

And now we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may more and more grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We desire that our life shall be conformed to his; our heart to his; our whole image to his. We desire to rise from glory to glory by the power of God; to overcome things that assail us in this mortal life; to endure unto the end; and to be glorified with him in the kingdom of heaven.

Vouchsafe, we pray thee, to all thy people this morning that illumination of thy presence, that joyful blessing of thyself, which shall give them to themselves.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt sanctify to every one the various experiences of the past week. If there are any that have come down through battle with care and trouble all the way to this morning wilt thou this morning speak to their adversaries, that there may be peace to their souls on this day of rest. If there are those who have come wet with tears, wilt thou comfort them with the assurance of thy sympathy Greet them, this morning, with that light of thy countenance by which their very sorrows shall be made beautiful to them, so that to them weakness shall be strong, darkness full of stars, and death full of life.

Grant we pray thee that we may not desire to draw ourselves back from the experiences of good soldiers. May we remember our Master. May we remember how he became a perfect Captain through suffering, and how he learned obedience that he might be a Savior for us. And are we better than he? Shall he wear the crown of thorns, and we not touch with our hand even a nettle? Shall he be stoned even unto death, and we not be content unless we walk in all the royalty of life? Grant that we may be content to be followers of the Sufferer. May we be content to bear something of his cross—something of his experience? May we rejoice not only that we are permitted to be called by the name of Christ, but that to us it is given to suffer also for his name.

We pray that thou wilt carry light into every household, and comfort and encouragement into every darkened and despondent heart. Grant, if there be in thy presence those who are wrestling with their outward circumstances, and thy providential arrangements, that they may know how to cast their care on thee—to roll their burden on the Lord—that they may be lightened. And if there are those who are wrestling with their own nature, and who find that their own disposition is the trouble of their life, and that their souls are as a troubled sea which cannot rest, we beseech of thee that thou, who didst walk upon the midnight sea, and bring upon thy affrighted disciples peace and victory, wilt now come upon every one whose trouble is with himself and whose passions are as waves that will not rest. And we pray that in thee there may be certainty of triumph. We beseech of thee that none may be despondent in turning away from evil

and seeking good, nor be unwilling to go up the steep and narrow way. And may all be willing, even if it be with blood, to atone for their own sins. May they remember Him who shed his blood for their salvation.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt bless those who look upon the New Jerusalem from afar, and are not of it, and seek not its gates, like travelers that, from afar, look upon some city, and enter it not, and pass by it. Bring near those that are afar off. Grant that in the hearts of many there may be a quickening and an arousing of the conscience more and more. May they that are of the world feel how little the world has to give them. May they understand that while it has little to give to any part, it has nothing to give to that which is divinest in them.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be many turned away from wandering. May many be led back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. We pray that we may hear of those that are Christianly reared educating themselves. As their parents consecrated them in their youth, may they ratify that consecration in their early manhood.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all those who are going forth from day to day to baptize in thy name. Pour thy Spirit upon them, that they may be able to walk boldly and firmly and victoriously in the midst of the allurements of this world. We pray that thy servants may everywhere rejoice to be called of thee, and feel thee in the very way about them, by day and by night, and walk with a song, and an assurance of victory. And we pray that thy kingdom may come among those that are outcast. Bless those in whose hearts thou hast breathed the inspiration of mercy. And as thy servants go from the sick to the sick, from the imprisoned to the imprisoned, and from the outcast to the lost, grant that thy Spirit may go with them, and sanctify their endeavors. And as they water, so may they be watered.

O Lord, our God! we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless our Sabbath schools, and our Bible classes, and all those that are everywhere spread abroad in the week-day or sabbath, teaching the young. Ordain these instrumentalities for the benefit of the rising generation, and for thine own glory in them.

We pray that thou wilt bless all Churches of every name, and all that preach the Gospel. May their hearts be brought into such unison with thine that it shall be always and evermore a message from God, with the very spirit of heaven breathing in it.

We pray that thou wilt unite thy people with confidence. May the heart be mightier than the body. May the inward and spiritual union bring them together more than outward conditions can dissever them. And we pray that thy kingdom may come everywhere. May injustice cease. May wars come to an end, and the occasions of them pass away. We pray that superstition, and ignorance, and all things that offend, may be purged out of this world. And may the glorious predictions of the latter-day glory make haste, and unfold their banners, and show themselves mighty upon the mountains, and descend into the plains, for final victory.

And to thy name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of truth spoken to all that have heard it. Come for thine own, dear Savior. Come for thy followers, disheveled as they are, wandering hither and thither, and oppressed. O Lord Jesus! what is the experience of thy gentle and pitying soul, to see thine own so despoiled? When our children are scattered in evil, how do we bear burdens! and dost not thou still bear burdens on our account? Are we not still healed by the chastisements which are laid upon thee, and not upon us. Oh, abiding Savior! reveal to thy servants the way of salvation. Bathe our hearts in the atmosphere of thy love. Send summer upon us all. Give us an open eye and a receptive heart. Give us elevation into that region where we shall find our true food, our true society, and our true life. And thus may we live in a glorious beatific vision. Thus may we live in increasing amplitude of experience. And dying, may we go from glory to glory.

And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and forever. *Amen.*

IDEAL STANDARDS OF DUTY.

"Let God be true, but every man a liar."—Rom., III. 4.

The context is, "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

It sounds harshly; but there is nothing further from harshness than the spirit of this passage. Does it seem to ignore man's moral right? Is it the shadow of such a doctrine of sovereignty as would sacrifice the whole human race for the sake of building up a solitary God of ineffable glory? There have been ways of attempting to exalt God which substantially amounted to this: that he was an all-engulfing selfishness, and that he was to be made resplendent, no matter what became of everything else. Is this such a doctrine? Far from it. There is no such thing in it.

A man has rights before God as well as before his fellow men; and nowhere are they meddled with, except to augment and fortify them so much as in the tribunal of God's own heart.

The apostle had been showing the self-sufficient and spiritually conceited Jews that they had utterly failed of becoming truly religious by means of the old law. He was preparing the way to present Jesus Christ to them as the fulfillment of their law, and he was convicting them of all manner of disobediences under that law. And the question arises, as we shall see, very naturally, "What! was the law, then, good for nothing?" The law was good; but it was weak. It was not strong enough. It had not motive and authority enough. It meant the right thing, but man was too weak. Therefore, the law did not work out that which its interior spiritual tendency would have wrought out if it had been unchecked. But, if the law was weak, then God attempted to do what he was unable to do. If the law was dishonored in the conduct of the Jews, how should the Lawgiver retain honor? Was the law to blame, then? No; the law was good. "But," say

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men, "it failed; the Jews fell short of righteousness; and God is to blame." "No." says the apostle, "let God be true, but every man a liar. God is not implicated."

The tendency of the Jewish objector was to defend the national character, and to justify his compatriots, by bringing down the charac ter and government of God; and the apostle answered, "Let the justice and goodness of God remain untarnished, however it may affect men's reputation. It is not right that God should be clouded by the passions which arise from human conduct under the divine government. It is needful to man that the ideal of the universe, which God is, should remain untarnished." And the doctrine which we deduce from this passage is, *first*, the tendency of the human heart to seek to diminish the intensity of self-condemnation under a consciousness of ill-desert, by lowering the standard of duty; and *second*, the importance of maintaining our ideal of rectitude and of duty in spite of all imperfections on the part of men under such law or ideal.

All sense of self-condemnation arises from a comparison of one's deeds, character, life and motives, with certain definite standards of duty. If there had been no law, there could have been no sense of violating law, and no sense, therefore, of sin.

There is one thing which we bear less willingly than any other—namely, a sharp sense of shame in self-condemnation; and that, in proportion as the make-up of the character or the nature of a man is strong. If a man be weak, and he naturally tends to collapse, it does not make much difference to him whether it be one thing or another; but if the pillars of a man's soul are set up strongly; if his reason is luminous; if his self-respect is positive: if his ideal of true character and manliness is eminent, then there is nothing that he bears less willingly than to be brought into judgment before himself. The mischief of being brought to shame before men, is, that the very shame which our exposure before men excites, rebounds in us, and produces there self-degradation and self-abhorrance. There is no other feeling that is more mephitic, and none that seems to suffocate a man more, than to feel in his own sight condemned, and to be worried by his own accusing and condemning conscience. And in certain natures, and during certain periods of men's lives, almost without regard to their nature, it amounts actually to torment.

While, then, this feeling is so acute and so unbearable, it is scarcely surprising that men attempt to get rid of it. They pad their conduct, as it were, that the yoke may not bear so heavily where they feel sore. They attempt in one way or another, to get rid of this self-condemning feeling. They want to stand better with themselves than with anybody else. Therefore, men tell themselves more lies, and make believe more,

in this direction, than in any other. They flatter themselves. They deliberately fool themselves. They go about to do it—and for the same reason that men take opiates. "It is not good," says your physician, "that you should take opiates to remove that sharp pain. You had better take a longer course of medicament and remove the cause, and so get rid of the pain." "But," you say, "I must pursue my business; and, though it may not be the best thing, give me the opiate." Men will not, if they can help it, bear the sting, the rasp, or the ache, of self-condemnation; and by every means in their power they are perpetually trying to get rid of it.

The ordinary method is to impair that rule of conduct, or that ideal of life, which condemns them. They attack that which attacks them. They say, "That law which makes my conduct hateful shall not stand with such sovereignty. I will pull it down. I will hate it. I will dismantle it. It shall not stand with such imperious authority to overlook me, and then smite me with these pangs of self-reproach." Men plead the force of circumstances for breaking the laws which are most painful to them. They attempt to show that they are not to blame. They plead that breaking the law is not very sinful. That is, to save themselves, they destroy the dignity and the importance of the law. The law that, being broken, harms no one, has no reason for existing at all. And so if men say, "This is not a great sin: the law says it is; but the saying so does not make it so," it is a deceitful and underhanded way of attacking the law itself.

Now, according to the spirit of our text, let the law remain if every man is crushed. Let God be true; let him stand really God, speaking truth and acting justice, though the unclouded ideal of his glory and example should bring self-condemnation to every human soul.

Men at length directly assail the law. They lower its dignity. They deny its authority. They even make it a patron of their sins. Sometimes they actually represent it as being *particeps criminis* with them. Let us trace this tendency.

A child that will not obey his parents' injunctions begins, after a while, to find fault with the rigor by which he is held in check; and as he gets older he finds fault with the unreasonableness of family government; and he finds developed more and more in himself a strong tendency to resist and throw off parental authority. "To be sure," he says, "I *have* gone forth at untimely hours; to be sure, I *have* indulged in pleasures more than I ought; to be sure, I *have* had my own way in contravention of express authority; but then, *I* am not so much to blame. Who *could* live in a family screwed up as tensely as this is? A man must have *some* room. There is no chance to breathe at home. Everything is narrow and hateful here. I must

have liberty to *live*." In other words, what is all this but an attempt on the part of the child to excuse its own defects and disobedience, by inveighing against the nature of the law under which the obedience takes place? This tendency begins early; and a person is just as proficient in attempting to cover over his own wrong-doing by degrading authority, in childhood, as he will be when forty years have taught him the profession.

When the young go forth from under the parental roof to the training ground of life, they manifest the same tendency. The truant and dullard at school, not fulfilling his tasks, turns against the master, and at last against the school. He declares that *it is not his fault.* Or, if he admits that it is his fault in part, he pleads the *provocation*—the PROVOCATION! And so the rebellious boy at school tarnishes the good reputation of the teacher, and inveighs against the school. "I would rather be in the Black-hole of Calcutta!" he says—and all because he will not study, and because he will frolic in ways that destroy the government and regimen of the school.

If a young man is learning a profession, and he prefers to sport rather than to work, and is indolent, and unsteady, when the pressure of blame and condemnation begins to come on him, he turns instantly to find reasons, not in himself, but in the master, in the shop, in the business; and he finds fault with every thing except that corrupt and fractious disposition which he carries in his own soul. He blames everybody and everything but his own self.

When under the head and heat of youthful passions men defy the moral public sentiment which expresses the social conscience of the community, and come under its ban, and begin to smart, the more generous natures are sometimes recovered; but you will find that ordinarily the infliction of the unerring penalty of public sentiment on selfish and proud natures, leads them to attack public sentiment. If it be a course of impurity that they have pursued, they charge public sentiment with prudery. If they have been going in ways in which they have left truth far behind, they charge public sentiment with fanaticism. If they have been indulging their passions, they charge public sentiment with being under the control of puritanism. Men will eat to gluttony, and drink to intemperance, and wallow in bestial lusts, and indulge in all manner of pleasures, being profuse in everything but rectitude, and then, when the worthlessness and mischievousness of their career is brought home to them, they will turn and inveigh against that law, and that ideal of rectitude, and that very notion of manhood, to which they are held, and by which they are measured. And, more than that, they do not believe there is anything in the community better than they are.

That which is true in respect to the social defections of men, becomes also a marked feature in criminal life. As men begin to violate the laws of the community in the spirit, or in the letter, or both; as they begin to suffer, either under the loss of reputation or under the suspicion of having lost it; as they begin to feel the stings of penalty, they seek to excuse themselves from blame, and to fix it upon others. Even when the law cannot get its hand upon them; or when, getting it on them, it cannot hold them (for in some cases men are like eels, and the law is a fisherman that can catch them but cannot hold them; and in other cases men are like electric eels that paralyze the one that touches them); and when they begin to feel that other law, the unwritten law, which no man can escape; when they begin to feel the judgment of good men's thoughts; when they begin to feel the wintry blast of good men's indignation round about them, and they are called "sharpers," and are treated as such, and they are said to be "too keen for honest men," and they begin to feel the cold glance and the imperious bearing of the consciously good man that looks down upon them —then they resent it. They complain that it is an indignity heaped upon them; that it is a wrong done to them. And if you press their misconduct home upon them, they say, "Society is wrongly organized. Society is the mother of crime in modern times. If society were better organized, business would be conducted differently, and men would act differently But how can you expect that a man will be right when everything is organized on wrong principles?" And so men, in order to justify their personal dishonesties, their own criminal acts, destroy the reputation of society, and the equity of business, or seek to do it.

In special avocations men are perpetually justifying themselves for wrong conduct. In the ministry, in the law, in the medical profession, in mechanical pursuits, in commercial operations, men justify themselves by pleading that such and such callings cannot be successfully followed without moral obliquity. And what is this but tarnishing these employments, destroying their reputation, for the sake of shielding one's own.

Law becomes an oppressor in the eye of the transgressor; and instead of laying their hand on their mouth, and their mouth in the dust, and crying, "Guilty! guilty!" they stand and arraign the law. They plead "circumstances." They declare that they are not so bad as they are thought to be. They complain that they are measured wrongly. And so they would have God a liar, as it were, that they might be justified. But "let God be true, and every man a liar." Let not your ideal of justice, your ideal of excellence, your ideal of essential beneficence, and the wisdom of all the great forms in which society has developed itself in the spheres of business, go down for the sake of

covering up your sin-stung conscience. Humble yourself, and reform, but do not attempt to shield yourself by destroying the very foundations on which life and integrity stand.

This general disposition has a sphere of activity in regard to virtue, probity, sincerity and temperance. It is bad enough for one to be unvirtuous, dishonest, insincere, and intemperate; but the mischief is not half done when these vices, these social misdemeanors, are developed in men. There is something worse than such evils. When a man is intemperate he sins against his own body and soul, in the mere act of inordinate stimulation, which disorganizes both the physical, the intellectual, and the moral parts of the being; but he may still know that there is such a thing as self-government, and respect it, and still believe that there is such a thing as temperance, and revere it. But what if he has given himself over to be a bond-slave to his appetites? and what if, besides that, he justifies himself, and says, "I am no more intemperate than anybody else. I am frank and open. I drink, and show it. Other men drink more than I do, and do not show it. Just go behind the door and see what these temperance men do. They are all a pack of drunkards, only they are hypocrites. I am the only honest man among them?" What is this? Why, it is the plea of a man who, not satisfied with being a drunkard, is destroying the very ideal of temperance. He does not believe that there is anybody better than he is, if you could only turn the secrets of his heart outside. But here is a double destruction—the destruction of his own life, and the destruction of all faith in the ideal of temperance.

Here is a man who has utterly gone away from virtue and chastity. It is bad enough, one would think, for him, from day to day, to cast himself away thus; but that is not all. He says, "I do seek my pleasure as I list; but then do not other people? Talk about my being unjust? Who is just? Impure, am I? Well, I think I have company enough in this world. I do not believe there is anybody that is pure. It is because they cannot, and not because they will not, that they do not run into excesses. Circumstances may hinder them for a little while; but there is nobody who is not temptable." Such men stand inveighing against the memory of their very mother, and whelming the reputation of pure and noble sisters, speaking sad words—mingling with degradation the very name of womanhood. A man who has lost respect for womanhood in actual life may be considered as given over. He is an abandoned wretch. And yet, it is not enough for some men that they follow their violent passions, and seek their own illicit and unchaste and impure pleasures; but they seek to hide the degradation, and cover up the guilt, and cure the smart of their condemning conscience, by pulling down the reputation of woman, and

destroying faith in virtue itself. "All men," they say, "secretly are bad, and all women too. They are alike." They contend that everybody is as bad as they are. And here is a case in which one should say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

Oh! save something that is true and pure. Look up at something that is higher than yourself. Pull not down the stars, and tread them under your feet. I abhor—I abhor with a loathing that grows with my years—I despise and detest with all the divinity that is in me, that recreant wretch who seeks to slime the reputation of the true and pure and beautiful, in order to hide his own degradation.

There are those who pursue the same course in regard to probity. They are not themselves truth speakers; neither do they believe that any man does speak the truth. "If you will follow that man sharply," they say, "you will find that he lies sometimes. He is more foxy than I am, and he conceals a great deal. I act right out when I act at all. If I want to lie, I lie, and I own it—after it has accomplished what I sent it for. There are other men who do not seem to lie; but if you could only search them you would find that they are as much given to lying as I am." And so men, to justify their conscious defection, impugn the integrity and veracity of all their fellow men. "I am a swindler," says one. "I know that I get a living by dishonest practices. But who does not? Wherein am I different from my fellow men? If you gave them a chance, do not you suppose they would take it? If you hold out a sixpence for a bait, some men will bite at it. But some men will not, simply because they want more. Bait them with a hundred dollars and they will bite. Some men, however, will not take that bait; but a thousand will catch them. There are some men who want more than that; but they will take a hundred thousand. Some men you could not bribe with a hundred thousand; but you could with a million. There is not a man that gold will not fetch, if you offer him enough of it. Therefore, in what respect am I different from other men? I am, to be sure, dishonest. I am a jolly fellow, and I take money where I can get it, and I own it; and other men are just like me, only they do not own it." And what does he do? He destroys his own integrity and honor, and bows down to avarice, and carries all that is divine in him underneath his lust for gain; and then, as if that were not enough, he turns, like the dragon, and sweeps the stars with his tail out of heaven. He destroys the very ideal of honesty by declaring that nobody is honest.

The young man that has lost faith in honor and virtue and integrity is himself lost. There is no redemption for such a man until you can bring him back to faith in moral qualities, and to a belief in their existence in his fellow men, and in their stability under powerful temptations.

The same tendency may also be traced in men's reasonings on the subject of religious truth. I have shown that it begins in early life; that it runs through industrial forms; that it finds its way into social relations; that it manifests itself in men's arguments on the subject of vice; and that it does not stop short of, but pervades, even the pleas by which criminals seek to defend themselves. And, going on still further, it affects men's theology, or their philosophy of moral life and conduct. Men care very little what theology teaches, provided it does not come home to them, either as a restraint or as a criterion of judgment. Therefore, when the teaching of the pulpit is such, or the state of the community is such, that men do not feel pressed sharply by religious influences, they give themselves no trouble; but when they begin to be made uncomfortable; when the bands begin to draw; when for one or another reason the pulpit is a power, and they find it in the way of their ambition in political matters, or in the way of their gain in worldly matters, or in the way of their peace and comfort in social matters, or in the way of their satisfaction with themselves; when theology begins to stir them up, and sit in judgment on them, then there is a strong tendency developed in them to find fault with the truth, and to justify themselves by adopting a lower view; or, as they are pleased to call it, "a more liberal view." It is under such circumstances that God's sovereignty, his absolute ownership, his right to command, his right to administer truth and justice so that they shall search the inner life, and take hold upon the substance of being, is questioned, and men begin to consider the character of such a God as unlovely, tyranical, hard, and a government springing from such a nature as a government of rigor. Yea, when the law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," they say, "I cannot love the Lord my God, whom I never saw, with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. It is impossible. And when I am commanded to love my neighbor as myself, I am commanded to do that which I cannot do. It is stretching matters unreasonably and unwarrantably."

And so men find fault with the fundamental principles of moral government. The exposition of human character, the analysis of motives, all the morbid anatomy of the human heart, begins to be offensive, and men are not at peace with themselves, and they charge the blame upon other men, upon society, and sometimes even upon the divine government, and God himself. And under such circumstances they go from church to church, to find a more lenient pulpit, where there are more roses, and fewer thorns; where the fruit is not so sour; where the clusters are sweeter; where a more attractive view is given of the divine nature.

Then you shall hear men saying, "I can never be driven by fear. You may perhaps win me by love; but you cannot drive me by fear." And I never knew a man that set himself up in this way, and said that he could not be driven by fear, who could be persuaded by anything. Such a man is just as impervious to honor as to fear. He is just as well armed against the persuasions of conscience as he is against the persuasions of fear. Faith and hope cannot persuade him. Love cannot draw him. Authority cannot daunt him. He is immovable and adamantine in the absolute obstinacy of his depravity. Men would rather quarrel with their doctrine, quarrel with their belief, quarrel with their God, than to quarrel with themselves, and be under self-condemnation.

This passage, then, which at first seems to be a harsh one, when you come to carry it out in all its philosophical relations, reveals a tendency which is universal among men—namely, the tendency of a man's conscience to quarrel with the standard of duty, with the ideal of rectitude, rather than repent of the sins which that standard and that ideal have convicted him of, and outgrow his littleness and wickedness.

Now, the destruction of ideal standards is utterly ruinous to our manhood. What is an *ideal?* The word is often used, and might be used still more often. An *ideal* is a perception of something higher and better than we have reached, either in single actions, or in our life and character. It may relate to single acts. An artist has an ideal picture when he is painting a real picture. Woe be to the man whose painting surprises him by being better than he thought! He must have thought very vulgarly. There is that prophetic gift in every soul of any elevation by which there hangs over every step a vision of something higher, and better, and nobler, and sweeter and purer. Every man who is really and fully organized on a noble pattern, has hovering over him a vision of angels transcendently more beautiful than any embodiment of it. He has conceptions of truth infinitely more grand than any exhibitions of truth which he sees on earth. Beauty flames in the heavens with colors brighter than any that can be reproduced in this world. How do they who attempt to fulfill the offices of friendship find every day that they sit in judgment upon themselves because they have not half way come up to their conception of its patience, of its disinterestedness, of its gentleness, of its faithfulness!

Do I need to ask you what your ideal is, ye that have sought in a thousand ways to reach that very conception? The musician is charmed with the song that in his imagination he seems to hear angels sing; but when he attempts to write it down with his hands he curses the blundering rudeness of material things, by which he cannot incarnate so spiritual a thing as his thought. It is all torn: it is stripped

of its plumage, as it were, and reduced to captivity. The true orator is a man whose unspoken speech is a thousand times better than his utterance. The true artist is not a man who can look upon the thing which he has colored and say, "It transcends what I saw," but a man who says, "Oh! if you could see what I saw when I first tried to make this, you would think this most homely." This *excelsior* of every soul; this sense of something finer, and nobler, and truer, and better—so long as this lasts a man can scarcely go down to vulgarism. So long as this lasts there is in every man a nascent inspiration which tends to look away from self—which certainly does not incline a man to measure himself by his fellow men. It is vulgar for a man to be satisfied with himself because he is better than his fellow men. Every man should have something outside of himself, and outside of his fellow men, by which to measure himself. Every single day should be a day to you of royal discontent. You never thought as well as you ought to think. You never meant as highly as you ought to mean. You never planned as nobly as you ought to plan. You never executed as well as you ought to execute. Over the production of the scholar, over the canvas of the artist, over the task of the landscape gardener, over the pruner's knife, there ought to hover, perpetually, his blessed ideal, telling him, "Your work is poor—it should be better;" so that every day he should lift himself higher and higher, with an everlasting pursuit of hope which shall only end in perfection when he reaches the land beyond.

But what if some mephitic gas shall extinguish this candle of God which casts its light down on our path, to guide us, and direct our course upward? What if clouds sway round it, and hide it? What if the breath of man, for whom it was sent, shall blow it out, and he be left in darkness through the vast ether, and doomed to puzzle and grope his way, and sink down toward the beast that perishes? Woe be to that man whose ideal in art, and literature, and friendship, and honor, and morality, and religion, in the whole sphere of life, has gone out and left him to the vulgar level of common life, without spring, without upward motive, without aspiration. That is vulgarity indeed. They are not vulgar who wear poor clothes; they are not vulgar who have open windows at their elbows; they are not vulgar who wear gaping shoes; they are not vulgar who delve in the dirt, or labor in the quarry, or toil in the colliery, or stand at the smith's anvil, and are besmutted; they are not vulgar who do common things, and work with the hands. They who walk in silk, and have no aspiration, are vulgar. They that shine like silver and gold, but have no ambition for anything nobler and better, are vulgar. What wine is, which has stood uncorked, and lost all its bubbling gas and snap and life, that

is a man who has lost all that which should make him foam and effervesce. A man who has come to be content—what is he worth, more than a cake not turned, burnt on one side, and dough on the other, and good for nothing either way?

And yet, that which our text reveals, and revealing condemns, is universal (more in some circumstances than in others, and more with certain natures than with others)—namely, the attempt of men to find fault with law, or with God, the fountain of law, to find fault with the ideal of rectitude, to put out that ideal which raises them above the crawling worms and hopping beasts of the earth, rather than find fault with themselves. Nay, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

Are there none in this congregation who have found themselves limned and described in this discourse? I know many of you feel that there is truth in what I have said to-night. It touches a chord of your own experience. You know that the tendency is to degrade and lower the standard of duty for the sake of relatively elevating yourselves in your own regard. And are there not some here who need special application of this matter to them? Are there not many of you who have departed from the faith of your fathers, not following a true moral impulse, not following a real life, not enlarging your religious experience, but seeking and hungering after a nobler government and a nobler God than has been taught you? Are there not many of you who have found the faith of your childhood inconvenient, because it would not permit you to run in the ways of thrift, and who have sought another faith? Are there not many of you who have found your early faith a self-restraint, and a hinderance to you in your career of pleasure? Are there not many of you who have put away your Bibles because you found that they stood in the way of your degradation? Have you not laid religion aside so as not to be tormented? Have you not forsaken the house of God? Are there not men here to-night who can say, "Till I was of age, the Sabbath was a day of devotion to me; but since I came down to the great city, and learned the ways of life, I have scarcely for ten years been inside of the house of God." Why have you ceased to be a reader of the Bible? Why have you ceased to pray? Why have you ceased to frequent the ways of God's people? Is it not, if you search the matter to the bottom, because these things stood in the way of your own self-seeking, and because, with them, you could not be as proud and selfish and grasping as you wanted to be, and could not seek sensuous enjoyment as much as you wanted, and could not give way to self-indulgence and follow illicit and disallowed ways as much as you would? And did not you give up your faith, or bury it, for the time being, just because your guilty, wicked, corrupt heart felt the gird of God's law, and you

did not mean to be restrained, and you sought, as it were, to dethrone God? You have shut up your Bible, and very likely learned the lore of infidelity, for no other purpose than to keep down the mutterings of your own conscience. You have been unfaithful to your early convictions; you have been recreant to the dictates of your best judgment and conscience; you have disregarded your sense of honor; you have vulgarized yourself, and degraded yourself, and put out the light of your ideal; and you are making your whole life carnal, sensual and devilish.

Now, I call you to judgment with yourself. You know that you are wrong. You know that such a course as this is not simply wrong, but meanly wrong. More than that, you know it is a wrong that cannot end in other than destruction and degradation forever.

There are many who have pursued a course which in the beginning seemed right to them, but which has proved to be wrong. The deflection was slight at first, the incipient wrong was deceptive, and they went on step by step, and became involved; and at last are entangled beyond hope of release. How many of you have found your moral sense so perverted that sins are not the same to you that they once were! Not only religion but morality has gone from some of you. You maintain its forms, because that is a necessary condition of living in society at all. It is thus that you pay respect to the conscience of the community. But inwardly many of you have foresworn faith, even in moral qualities in dealing between man and man.

If God should light the candle of research and go into your hearts, what revelations there would be! Every now and then there comes some astounding revelation which startles the community. But there are many other revelations that are not made so public, where they remain silent, as they should, in the pastor's knowledge. Young men reveal their career to me. One young man is brought to the brink of trouble, and is seeking relief. Another young man is asking his way back from ways of vice. Another young man is in despair lest he is already beyond the reach of help. And the opening of these doors of confession shows how much there is of falling into temptation. And I cannot but feel solemn when I stand from Sunday to Sunday among so many young adventurers; among so many that have taken their life in their hands and embarked for time and eternity, and whose welfare is as dear to me as if they were mine. I am a father, and I have sent out barks to be navigated—my own children. I know that the ocean is infinite, eternal, unfathomable. They part from me on this shore, and land on that, where the wave touches the kingdom of God, or the region of everlasting despair. And I know what it is to yearn for my children, though God has greatly blessed me in that they have gone

right. But I feel as a father feels toward his own children, toward many of you. I know there are many here who have no father to pray for them. I remember, every Sabbath day, when I look into your faces, that I stand as it were in the place of father, and mother, and brother and friend to you. You have no counsellor, many of you. They that naturally would advise you are far from you. And I cannot but speak to you. And though I speak to you in severity sometimes, and in warning often, it is the warning of a friend who often bears you before God in prayer.

Are there not many of you who, for the sake of self-indulgence, have gone wrong in things which, if they were brought to light, would be like the day of judgment flaming before your eyes? Are there not many of you who are losing your faith in essential moral manhood, because it is easier for you to disbelieve in right and honor and rectitude than to say to yourselves, "I am a culprit; I am a thief; I am a liar!" Oh! call yourselves anything; sit in judgment on yourselves, rather than let there arise from your heart the clouds and miasmas that shall put out your belief in these higher elements, and in the safety of them. Though you perish, save your faith. Die, at last, believing that there is such a thing as truth; that there is such a thing as rectitude; that there is such a thing as virtue; that there is such a thing as God, such a thing as heaven, and such a thing as blessedness. With your own destruction do not wreck the universe, and wipe out all faith and hope. That would be destruction indeed. And yet, you are steering right toward it. You are borne on a current that has wrecked thousands in this way. Beware! "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

Oh! why not take counsel of your better thoughts? Why not take counsel of your own blessed hours? Even the lion sports with the kid before he destroys it. The cat that has caught the mouse plays with it as if she were its own mother before she devours it. And the most infernal habits paw their victims at times, and give them some space to run in before completing their destruction. I have seen nimble mice that were wiser than their tyrant cat, and that, taking advantage of their little space, shot into some crevice, and away, to the disappointment and chagrin of grimalkin. And are there not some here who have intervals, moments, when temptation plays them, and lets them go free? Shoot! fly! in those lucid moments, from besetting sins. If the cord is once loosened, let it not come on again. For your soul's sake, for heaven's sake, for the sake of glory and honor and immortality, risk everything. Put not your hands in the gyves and shackles.

This is solemn, day-of-judgment business. We are going fast

through life. There is little left to any of us, and to most of us less than we think. Ye that to-day are triumphant in full health, stand on the verge of the grave. Your fate is only suspended. And I beseech of you, while tender thoughts are upon you, while hope is yet before you, and while the reasonableness of my exhortation approves itself to every one of you, see to it that you do not give up your faith. See to it that you believe in God, in truth, in integrity, and in virtue; that you maintain the law of these things as the rule of your conduct. Condemn yourselves; bow down yourselves in shame if you are transgressors; correct your life; but do not destroy your belief. "*Let God be true, but every man a liar.*"

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou gracious God, Father of our spirits, we draw near to thee this evening, in the confidence of children. We have often come unworthily; and yet, even then thy benignity has blessed us. Thou dost not measure our gifts by our deserts, or long ago we should have perished. Thou dost take thy measures from thine own generous nature. Thou art generous in overmeasure. Thou wilt have mercy. Thy heart is our hope and our joy. For, when we look upon ourselves, upon our poor and diminished estate, upon our shrunk and miserable nature, what is there in us that should draw thine eye of regard? We are lower than thou art. We are further removed from thee than the worms are from us; for they keep their estate, and come to the fulness of their being, and do not err on the right hand nor on the left. But we, endowed more royally—yea, with the nature of God—have employed its forces and its powers to carry ourselves every whither in imperfection, and have given way to our passions and appetites, and to every vagrant imagination, and wandered into selfishness and pride, and have destroyed ourselves by the very nobility of our powers; by all that was strong and wide-reaching; by all that had in it elevation. We have sought to make ourselves sovereign, and to separate ourselves one from another, and to surpass each other, and to build here our homes, and forgot the immortal and heavenly inheritance, and struck the music of earthly desire. And thou hast seen how we have perverted all the parts of our being, and how far we are from grace and from God. And yet, while we were thus in darkness and disobedience and perversion, and before we wished to leave them—before aspiration came to us—thou didst have compassion. For it was thy sun that melted the snow that lay heavily. It was thy sun that sought the root that was asleep beneath the ground. It was thine eye that was the summer of the world, and thou didst bring forth, in glorious recreation, all sweet and pleasant things. And we love thee because thou didst first love us. It was thy love that taught us to aspire and to love. And now, though we are far from thee, and languid in every holy desire; though we are full of imperfections; though we requite the utmost generosity with abased selfishness, and though thy faithfulness is met by our forgetfulness every day; yet thou art constant, blessed be thy name. Thou art drawing us to some thought of constancy. Our desires come thicker and faster for a noble character. We begin to desire more and more the heavenly inheritance. More and more we are seeking to follow thee, even though we bear the cross to do it. We are beginning to know the nobility of sorrow. We are beginning to taste how sweet is bitter. We are beginning to know that our lost life is the only life saved. We are beginning to find out how humility is exaltation, and how when we are empty we are filled with all the fullness of God.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that these, the fruits of thy faithfulneas, may abound more and more. May the life that was in Christ Jesus be breathed upon us; and may we become like him in all gentlenss; in all sweetness of life; in all hope and aspiration; in all patience; in all faithfulness to each other; in all true affection. And grant, we beseech of thee, that we may walk as strangers and pilgrims, even in the midst of our best estate. May we feel that heaven is infinitely better than the best earthly things, and that these are but as a harness. May we not seek our good here. May we not seek to have our inheritance now. Give us that treasure laid up in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon each one in thy presence, according to his special need. Look into the heart of every one. Know the sorrows and the necessities of each. Grant that every one may feel that the Spirit is by his side. May that divine and sanctifying influence, which is the comfort of our life, be granted unto each, according to the need and according to the providence under which he hath come hither.

Look, we beseech of thee, upon all the laborers in thy cause, and upon all thy Churches, of every name. And may those greater things in which they agree unite them more and more; and may those things about which they differ, and which divide and vex and harrass, be taken quite out of the way.

We pray that thy kingdom may come in all forms of law, and of intelligence, and of justice, and of civil administration, and of human liberty, and of universal civilization. and may the world, redeemed from its animal conditions, at last become thy world. A new heaven, and a new earth let there be, in which shall dwell righteousness.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt add thy blessing to the word that has been spoken. By thy mighty Spirit draw forth men from their entanglements—from the bewilderments of the wilderness. O thou God and Shepherd, save the imperiled little ones. Bring them back in thine arms. Seek the wandering and the reckless. Bring them back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

We pray that the word of truth may not be in vain. As rain on good ground, and as seed sown therein, may it be to thine honor and glory.

We ask it through Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

FAULTS.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another."—JAMES, V. 16.

Nothing can be further from that discreet good sense which pervades the New Testament, than to inculcate a habit of tattling about one's self. It is extremely repulsive to have one narrate his sicknesses and ailments of body; and hardly less so his faults of disposition, of conduct, and of nature. There is a reserve in this matter which belongs to true delicacy and modesty, and so to wisdom. James encourages no such gossip about one's self. Yet we are commanded to *confess our faults*. *Confess* here is equivalent to *admit*. We are to admit them when they occur, and when they are charged upon us. When, as is usually the case, there is a question between us and others, we are to admit ourselves to be in the wrong, we are to acknowledge our faults.

We shall attempt to show the nature of faults, their effects, and the duty and reasons of confessing them.

I. The term *fault* in scripture is frequently employed as synonymous with *sin*. It also has a special sense, and relates to small sins. This meaning has become fastened to the word in modern usage; so that unless it is qualified by some circumstance in the text, we always understand the term *fault*, applied to human conduct, to mean an infelicity, an infirmity, a foible, a small evil; and we are accustomed to mark a clear and sharp distinction between sins, in all their specifications, and simple faults. They are of a lower moral grade.

Just such a term is needed. There is, in fact, just that discrimination to be made between grave sins and minor infelicities. This distinction represents the yet universal imperfection of man's nature in all its parts—the crudeness of his judgment, and the unskilfullness of his handling of himself.

There may be a perversion of the intellect, there may be a wanton

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misuse of it, that we should call *sinning*; or there may be an imperfect or poor use of it, which we should call *faulty*. There are sins and vices and crimes developed from the human passions; but then, the human passions may be guilty only of infelicities of appetite, of yearnings, of minor discords. Faults represent the unconscious imperfections of moral conduct—the ten thousand little sins of daily life which do not argue intentional wrong, and which yet are annoying and mischievous.

Faults in this point of view belong to every part of a man's nature and to every portion of his conduct—to the tongue, to the hand, to the temper, to the reason, to the conscience, to every affection, and to every sentiment. There is no one part of a man's nature that is without fault; and no man can carry himself through a single day without faults multitudinous. They are the signs and tokens of men's universal imperfection. They are called *failings* sometimes, when they result from weakness. Over-actions and excesses they are on the other side. They are now the result of excessive activity; but then, by-and-by, of feebleness in action. Too much blood beating in the passions forces them to insobriety. Too little fire in them, and they fail to generate that steam by which life is kept in vigorous motion; and the *too much* and *too little* are alike faults, unless they go on to something more grave and serious. The *just enough* and *not too much* are very hard, however, to find. Human feelings are like the mercury in the barometer, changing to the variations of pressure, through every hour, or like the mercury in the thermometer, varying according to the quantity of heat in the atmosphere, and never long stationary. We carry a mind so subtle and sensitive that it is perpetually changing and varying.

If one considers how much every man has to carry along—his equipments; his intellectual faculties; his moral sentiments; his affections; his passions and appetites; and all of them affiliated with the body, affecting it, and being themselves affected by it; if one considers how large is that battalion which has been enlisted in him; if one considers how sensitive the human soul is to influences; and if one considers in the midst of what whirling excitements he is carrying himself in the experience of the household, in the strifes of business, or in the heat of public life, he will not wonder that no man keeps his exact equipoise, and that, quite aside from downright sins, life swarms with faults.

There are two extremes of opinion respecting faults. The one regards them with an excessive, uncharitable emphasis of blame. The other sometimes utterly ignores them, and sometimes ostentatiously undervalues them, as factors of moral results. Either extreme is

wrong. Faults are not sins, necessarily, though they breed sins; and yet, they are not harmless. There is great danger in them, and great mischief in them, and great misery in them. They should therefore be studied, outgrown, corrected. It is to help you in this regard that I shall open the subject further this morning.

II. Let us consider the effects, upon human life and character, of faults—not of grave mistakes; not of great sins of the strong arm and nimble foot; but those ten thousand little things that men do which are not just right, which they themselves could wish they had not done, and which everybody else could wish they had not done, but which are passed by, and of which it is said, "These are their weaknesses." We say, by way of excusing them, "We all have our faults." And so we brush them away.

There is a right charity on this subject; but it is wiser for each of us to take heed to our faults. For,

First, Faults are often stepping-stones to heinous sins. They go before and prepare the way. They tend to dull moral sensibility. They tend to make us self-indulgent, negligent and careless in regard to perfectness of thought, and feeling, and conduct. By so much as we fail to reach it, we should cling to it as an ideal all the more tenaciously. This is especially true of faults in the direction of the moral sentiments. A very slight carelessness in truth-telling will lead by-and-by to the gravest temptations towards falsehood. This is the reason that the Master says, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." Small faults are baits and toles to draw men up to greater ones, so that their mischief is not measured by their own diameter, but by that which they lead to.

Foolish birds are the turkeys, that never lift up their heads when they are feeding, and never let them down when they are not. So, in the West, men are accustomed to select a sort of slope, or side hill, and cut a little channel, or path, and surround it with a kind of rail fence without roof or any protection. Along this path they strew corn—which is very good. Corn *per se* is excellent for turkeys. And the wild turkeys come in flocks and pick up the corn, following the path, and do not look up to see where they are being led to till they have passed under the lower rail, and got into the enclosure; and then, there being no corn there, they lift up their heads, and see where they are. They cannot fly over the fence (a turkey cannot rise on his wings unless he has a chance to run), and they cannot get out unless they lower their heads, and that they will not do; and so they are caught. The corn is not bad in itself, but see what it leads to. It is strewn along the way to a pen purposely devised to catch the fool turkeys, and they, picking it up, are caught.

Of thousands of faults men say, "This is not much." No, it is not much; but it is laid along your path in such a way that the first thing you know you will find yourself surrounded by a pen of dishonesty from which you cannot creep nor fly out. Faults are toles which lead to things that are worse.

A very wide space of uncertainty lies between honesty and dishonesty. We ought not to say that irregularity, or carelessness, or a certain obtuseness of honor, is dishonesty. I hear men in the street say, "I do not suppose that man to be dishonest; but his sense of honor allows him to do what I never could do." Irregularity, carelessness, and a low sense of honor may not themselves be sins; but they may lead men into that region where sins will be inevitable. And the fault, whatever it may be in itself, is very dangerous on account of that which it leads to.

There is a little gipsey girl in the old castle, and some one says to the lord, "You have an enemy there." "What! that little gipsey girl?" says the lord, "what can she do? Here am I with my armed men; and every gate and door and window is bolted and barred. I guess she cannot take the castle." No, she cannot take it; but at dead of night she can go and draw back some bolt, and let men in that can take it. And there is many and many a fault that is not itself strong enough to do you much harm, but that is strong enough to open the door and let temptations in that can take you captive and destroy you. Therefore faults are many of them to be watched against, and feared, not so much for what they are in themselves, as for that which they may bring upon you.

Again. Faults unwatched tend to run together, and so to become far more potent than they are in detail. A little sharpness in a person's voice occasionally is not unpleasant. A little spirit is necessary. It is of the nature of spice. Life without anything in it, you know, is dough; and therefore a little temper—just a little spice—raises the dough, and makes bread of it. But a little more temper, and a little more, and a little more, and you are a shrew and a scold. The result is of great moment; but it is made up of the sum of little things, each one of which is apparently of not much importance.

What is there on earth so small as mist-drops? And even when, chilled by the cold in the atmosphere, a few of them come together, they fall as scattered drops of rain upon the ground. They can hardly make a leaf wink. And yet, when these drops fall in rapid succession, and continuously, and drop finds drop, and they run along together, a rill is formed. And another rill meets that one. And by and by there is a stream as big as your wrist. And such streams are the fathers of rivers, mighty and irresistible. And little things, that do

not amount to much in themselves, if there are enough of them, and they flow together long enough, constitute irresistible forces.

There is nothing that is more easily crushed than a small spider; but if you let him alone he breeds other spiders; and they will breed still other spiders. Did you ever see what a swarm of spiders will spring from one egg? And yet, all of them, soon after they are hatched, not only are predatory, but are weavers. Great is the tribe of weavers. Each goes to work to make himself a house—and that is well enough for a spider, that does not know any better. One of these spiders, perhaps, is in my window, and sets about making his house there. He does not seem to amount to much; but he has a power that is not to be despised. If I were to say that that little speck of a spider was an antagonist of the sun, and that it would beat the sun all hollow, you would laugh me to scorn; but it is so. For presently he has a brood of spiders —five hundred of them—and they set to work to spin their webs, and run them from side to side, from top to bottom, and from corner to corner; and by and by the window is covered all over. And particles of dust, flying through the air, settle on it, and fill up the little spaces between the threads. And after a while the spiders spin other webs and cover over the first ones. And the dust settles on these. And in a year, let the sun get through that window if he can! Big as he is, and strong as he is, the spider is more than a match for him.

So a multitude of little faults obscure moral sight, and dim a man's outlook, and substantially put out his eyes, so that he cannot see. Although each one of them is very small, they are very effective. Beware of faults that tend to reproduce themselves continually.

Faults also prevent true growth in life. There is a great difference, of course, between faults that prevent growth, and those that do not. There are many that do not seem to do it; but there are some that do do it. You may give a tree a good soil, and a good summer; and if that tree is a little sluggish, and it falls behind a little, it will be attacked by moss, which is a parasitic plant that draws its nourishment partly from the tree, and partly from the air; and it will very likely be attacked by a fly which is another kind of parasite that feeds upon the leaf. Each particular speck of moss, each particular fungus, that hangs itself upon the tree, amounts to very little. One apple-tree is ten million times bigger than one of those little plants that feed on it; but each one of these epiphytes shoots its little roots into the tree; and being multiplied by millions, they suck out the sap, and diminish the vigor of the tree, and prevent its growth. There are thousands of little faults that multiply on men, and act in the same way. The men become bark-bound, and leaf-blighted, and cease to have moral growth.

Faults, again, propagate themselves silently and secretly, and very

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dangerously; and they do mischiefs far from the point at which they start, and do mischiefs too, that apparently are quite beyond their own nature.

Up above the fifth story, there is just a pin's point that has rusted in the roof; and the painter has not been called in (for the man is economical, and does not intend to paint his roof too often). It being only a pin's point, there can but one drop get through at a time, and only a small one at that, and only occasionally can one get through—not oftener than once in fifteen minutes. And the man says, "What is that?" and laughs to scorn the idea that there is danger that he needs to be much afraid of. Yet, the first drop finds its way down, near the partition, to the attic floor. And by-and-by another follows it (for leaks never sleep, but work nights and days). And by-and-by another one follows that. This is going on at the very top of the house, and the people are down at the bottom. After a while there is enough water to start a new line; and it leaks through into the next room. Now you shall see that the ceiling begins to be discolored; and all along down the wall are streaks. And, the rain continuing through days and days, the leak continues. By and-by the water gets into the next story, and creeps in behind the secretary and book-case, and dampens and moistens the books, and gets hold of the papers, and molds them. And going down still further, to the next story, it gets at the pictures, and water-colored drawings, and engravings; and they are all damaged. Going down still further, it gets into the closet where the linen and cotton are kept; and they are all dampened and moistened. And all the way down there is a dampness and moisture that is unwholesome. The servant comes down sneezing in the morning; and the children come down coughing; and the old folks wonder why it is that they have the rheumatism so in a house that has such a good cellar, and is so well constructed, and has always been so healthy. There it is, that little insignificant leak; but drop following upon drop, through days and nights, has spoiled the roof, and spoiled the ceiling, and spoiled the paper on the wall, and spoiled the books, and spoiled the pictures and engravings, and spoiled the linen and cotton, and injured the health of man, woman and child.

Are not faults mischievous? Are there not persons that have leaks in the roof—yes, and other leaks besides? Is it not these continual droppings that spoil the fairest learning—books; that spoil the fairest dispositions and qualities—pictures and engravings; that spoil the fairest treasures and richnesses? Everything in a man may be moulded and shrunk and spoiled by these little perpetual infelicities of the temper and passions, or malign feelings, or what not.

Faults destroy beauty and symmetry of character, just as effectually

as sins do, frequently. The sense of proportion, the sense of fineness, the sense of harmonious combination, which constitutes what is called *art* when applied to physical things, also enters into every true and proper conception of human character. Character is a thing of symmetry, and proportion, and beauty; and any thing that tends to mar its beauty, or take away its symmetry, or disturb its proportion, tends to destroy the final form of the glorious ideal of true character.

A picture may be spoiled by being torn, or slashed: a bomb or ball may burst through the canvas and destroy it: but then, a picture in a neglected convent may be steamed by the range, and smoked by the chimney, and dimmed by the gathering dust of ages, and be put out by these silent incrustations of time as effectually as if it were taken out of the frame and burned. And as it is in art, so it is in character. You can overlay beauty, you can mar perfectness of quality or faculty, by little faults. And the displeasure is greater, frequently, when the thing is marred, than when it is destroyed.

I would a great deal rather that that exquisite vase, one of the fairest that I have, had been broken outright, and thrown away, than to have had it cracked. I have lost all pleasure in it. I turn it round so that no crack can be seen; I fix it, like a good Christian that puts the best foot foremost; but I know that there is a crack on the back side. I cannot use it for flowers, because it will not hold water; and I cannot use it to look at, because I know there is that ugly crack, though it is not in sight; and I wish somebody would smash it, and throw it away!

A man has a large emerald, but it is "feathered," and he knows an expert would say, "What a pity that it has such a feather!" it will not bring a quarter as much as it otherwise would; and he cannot take any satisfaction in it. A man has a diamond; but there is a flaw in it, and it is not the diamond that he wants. A man has an opal, but it is imperfect, and he is dissatisfied with it. An opal is covered with little seams, but they must be the right kind of seams. If it has a crack running clear across, it is marred, no matter how large it is, and no matter how wonderful its reflections are. And this man is worried all the time because he knows his opal is imperfect; and it would worry him even if he knew that nobody else noticed it.

So it is in respect to dispositions, and in respect to character at large. Little cracks, little flaws, little featherings in them, take away their exquisiteness and beauty, and take away that fine finish which makes moral art. How many noble men there are who are diminished, who are almost wasted, in their moral influence! How many men are like the red maple! It is one of the most gorgeous trees, both in spring, blossoming, and in autumn, with its crimson foliage. But it

stands knee-deep in swamp-water, usually. To get to it, you must wade, or leap from bog to bog, tearing your raiment, and soiling yourself. I see a great many noble men, but they stand in a swamp of faults. They bear fruit that you fain would pluck, but there are briars and thistles and thorns all about it; and to get it you must make your way through all these hindrances.

How many persons there are that are surrounded by a thousand little petty faults! They are so hedged in by these things that you lose all the comfort and joy that you would otherwise have in them. How many men there are of whom it is said, "There was the making of a man in him, but he is full of faults. Pity that he has spoiled himself!" But if we should pity all the pitiable things which we see in our fellow men, we should not have time to do anything else but pity, men are so faulty. And if men, prompted by charity, pity their fellows, how much must God and angels pity men!

Once more. Faults are great wasters of happiness. They are the source of frets. They mar our peace. They keep up petty discords. They are so small as to elude the grasp. They are like a piano (mine, for instance) that has been standing all summer in an empty house without being tuned. Some of the notes are too low, and some too high; and they are all of them just a little out of tune. The instrument is good, and sound, and pretty nearly chorded; but it is not quite in tune. And the *not quite* takes away all comfort from the musician who sits down to it. He plays, it may be, through the middle range without much discomfort; but when he strikes a note in the upper range, it makes him cringe. And it is so with happiness. Happiness is harmony. It requires the faculties to be harmonious all the way through. Violent excitement is seldom a source of great happiness. It gives joy for the moment, but it is not often the source of what we call true happiness. That comes from a lower range of action.

It is just at this point that faults disturb a man's happiness, and mar his enjoyment. Therefore you will find that men are almost never unhappy at all in proportion to the real afflictions which befall them Men oftentimes are a great deal happier under severe strokes than they were before the strokes came.

A man is prosperous in his affairs. The foundation is well laid, and the superstructure is going up nobly. Men serve him. He commands them. The heavens are propitious, and the sea and land favor him. But after all, he is troubled, and he worries and frets. He is unhappy, though he can scarcely tell you why. His companion at home, all sweet and serene, says to him in the morning, "My dear, why are you so gloomy?" He cannot tell why he is; but he *is*. There are little minute discords all through him. There is the friction of faculty on

faculty. There is a little under-gratification here, and a little over-gratification there. His mind is out of joint. It is not harmonious with itself. And faults are wasters of great force. Though they are small, they are powerful in destroying that balance of the mind which makes perfect harmony.

Faults are also dangerous, in their own way, because they have insect fecundity. They are apt to swarm. And though a few of them may not do much harm, when men come to have a great many of them they will avail as much as if they were actual transgressions. It is not necessary that there should be wolves, and lions, and bears in the woods to drive hunters out of them. Black flies, or musquitos, or gnats, will drive them out, if there are enough of them. These little winged points of creation make up what they lack in individual strength by their enormous multitude. You might kill a million, and make no impression upon them. Faults oftentimes swarm and become strong and dangerous by reason of their multitude. Multitude, in such cases, is equivalent to power.

The effect of faults is very great, also, upon a man's influence. Of course much depends on the underlying power of the individual; but frequently men have no personal charm, and no personal influence, on account simply of little blemishes which only need to be removed to enable them to shine out and be strong men. I have known men who failed in life, not from a lack of great powers, but from faults that marred the use of their powers.

I know that persons without faults are generally thought to be uninteresting. I think they are myself. But it makes a great difference where the faults are, and of what sort they are. What are called *perfect people* are marbleistic. They are people who do not do wrong, generally, because they do not do anything. They are cold and statue-like. I would as lief hold communion with a box of wax candles, as with a set of perfect folks, who are so cold and proper that they do not have any faults. That kind of perfect people lead us to say, frequently, that faults and sins make folks interesting. But, as I have already said, it depends a great deal upon what sort they are. There is a vein of truth in this; but you must be careful not to generalize too fast. What we want is to see that everybody, in proportion as he is strong and great, is really human, and is really of us, and has sympathy with us. Therefore, if a man is perfect; if he is symmetrical in his strength and wisdom; and if, at the same time, his kindness and sympathy and gentleness are such that they are all the while breaking out into faults, so that we feel his heart right against ours, then we like him, and say that these faults make him interesting. But they are little overactions of goodness and benevolence and pity, or they would not make him so interesting

We like the scholarly man who is encyclopedaic in his knowledge, and who yet is cheated by his boot-black. He could calculate the eclipses of the sun, and follow the planets in their courses, and in their utmost wanderings; you could not cheat him in regard to the remotest part of the stellar universe, to the amount of the smallest fraction. But a boy brushes his boots, and he gives him twenty-five cents instead of ten; and the boy makes him think that is right; and he goes away, and everybody laughs at it. And really, they like the old fellow better after that, the fault being one of generosity, and trust, and kindness.

We like faults that bring men down to us in affection, in benefaction, and in sympathy. A man who is cold, and does not care for his neighbor, nor for human life, though he were like an angel, or like a God, is a devil; for that it is to be a devil, not to care for the happiness of another. And the higher you lift him up, the stronger you make him, the more people do not like him They do not like to see this cold pride, this hard power, made radiant and bright, and they will not call it beautiful. But if a man is large, and is filled with all manner of gifts, carried high, while at the same time he has faults of kindness which ally him to his fellow men, then people think "That is grand! that is glorious! I like a man with faults!" So do I; but I do not want faults in the wrong place. Faults of the passions, faults of selfishness and pride and avarice, are hateful. The faults of love are beautiful. The faults of love are like the lisping words from youthful beauty. The faults of love are like the prattling English of little children. The faults of love are like the witching little mistakes that are made in the nursery and in the parlor. The only faults that should be tolerated are the faults of sympathy, the faults of pure love and goodness—not faults of evil.

I might go on and show a great many other things about faults; for, as they are multitudinous, so the theme itself is fertile; but this must suffice.

We are commanded, then, to *confess our faults.* To whom? The priest? Yes. The priest may be just as good as if he were not a priest! It ought not to be set down against a man if he is a priest. It ought not to be set down against a man if he is rich. A man may be good and yet be rich; and a man may be good and yet be a priest. And if any man knows a priest who is a good man, and is willing to listen to him and give him good advice, there is no earthly reason why he may not go to him. There is no reason why he must; but there is no reason why he may not, provided he goes to him, not as a priest, but as a sensible man who has a heart of sympathy, and a desire to help his fellow creatures.

But that is not what is meant, evidently, in the text. "Confess your

faults *one to another*." Do you not know that the penumbra in social life comes where persons begin a defence of their opinions. "You did it." "I did not." "You said so and so." "I did not say so and so." I refer to the ten thousand little faults, such, for instance, as the fault of justice, where one child says, "This is mine, and you shall not have it;" and another child claims it, and will not give it up—that is, where they are *on their consciences*. You shall often see faults of this sort exhibited by husband and wife. All through life are men that will defend their faults, and stand up and argue about them.

Frequently a man will admit his great sins, but not his faults. The apostle says, "You are to own your faults." If a man says, "You were proud," say, "Yes, I was proud." "You ought not to have done that." "Well, I ought not to have done it." "You said that through vanity." "It is true, I did. I was under the influence of vanity, and I sacrificed you through vanity. I confess it. Help me out of it next time." "You were over-eager, and you did not settle that matter as you ought to have done, between you and me, considering what we are to each other." "No, I did not." "You were not just to those young men under your charge. You thought of your own interest, and did not think of theirs. You did not put yourself in their places. You did not think of them, nor their mothers, nor anybody else except yourself. You were hard and unjust." "Well, I think I was. Yes, that was a fault. I did not see it then, but I do now, when my attention is called to it."

How beautiful it is to see a man confess his faults! So beautiful is it, that I wonder I do not confess mine oftener! But, my dear friends, I find that being virtuous up here, is a very different thing from being virtuous down there. I can preach first-rate virtue in sermons, and tell you most excellent things. I would to God I could be as good as I can preach. But I find it very hard; and I know you do, by what I see. We all find it hard, do we not? We are all imperfect. We are all sinners. We all need to confess. When I say that you are wrong, and you say that I am wrong, we need to confess *our faults one to another*. We need to be more gentle, and sympathetic, and loving and hopeful toward each other. As long as you make your faults a bulwark to stand behind and fight me, so long I am your enemy, and you are my foe. But if we could only understand how imperfect we are; if our hearts were only filled with a true humility, if we felt every day of our lives that God had a hard task to get along with us, it would make us far more gentle and amiable.

It is not the offence, but the *defence* of the offence, that makes it hard for us to bear with one another. A man may say to me, "You are a vile sinner;" he may rain his words on me like blows; but if he

comes back when his passion has gone down, with tears in his eyes, and says, "Oh! forgive me; I did not mean it," it is all gone, quicker than a flash of lightning. I love him all the more. The fault is not hard to bear. It is the defending the fault, it is the refusing to make up under fault, that rankles, and makes us ugly in return. Where there is one ugly man, there are two, generally.

How wise, then, is James' command, "Confess your faults one to another." Nor is that all—"and pray one for another." There are two ways of treating faults. One is to leap at them, and make haste to blazon them abroad; or, if restrained from doing that, to create suspicions in the minds of others concerning them. Have you not heard persons say of another's fault, "It is coming out. It will be all through the neighborhood soon. You just wait, and you will know. I cannot tell, because I promised not to; but it will not be long before it will be out." That is one way to treat faults. The other way is to treat them as a mother treats her child's faults. A child is sent home from school for some misdemeanor. It is a dark day for the mother. She goes to her closet, and takes the child in the arms of her heart before God, and says, "Oh Jesus! do not let my lamb be destroyed. Oh! give me wisdom to correct the child." Then, with tears, she gives stripes to the child; and every stroke is a double-acting stroke, which hurts her more than it does the child.

The apostle says, "When your brother offends, or does wrong, go and pray for him. Do not report his fault. Rejoice not in iniquity." And if we prayed more we should blame less; we should be far more tolerant; we should not suspect so much; we should not carry stories so much; we should not do wrong so much. For, there is nothing that makes a man so charitable as that which he has himself suffered.

An old veteran, who has gone through a hundred battles, and is as firm as a rock in the midst of dangers, has a young officer under his command, who, in his first action quivers with fear, and trembles like an aspen leaf. If this superior officer had never seen any service, he would scoff at the young man, and laugh him to scorn; but instead of that, the true man and veteran comes up to the frightened soldier, and says, "My young man, keep cool. You are doing well. I was as scared as you are when I first went into action; but I got over it, and you will get over it." What balm! what magnanimity! There is nothing like the sympathy which is created by our own experience.

Do you see men who have great faults of temper, and who are almost intolerable? If you have had faults of temper you ought to know how to bear with these men. If there is anything that you do not like in your neighbor, look and see if you have not the same thing in yourself in some form or other. Is there something that makes the

company of a certain person distasteful to you? See if the same thing, in some mode of development, has not found a place in you. Look into your hearts and learn to be charitable toward those who sin. It may be that you sin in the sight of God a hundred times more than those whom you blame. I believe that often when we are blaming men, our blame is more sinful before God than their transgression.

By *confessing our faults one to another, and praying for one another*, we learn humility on the one side, and on the other side that large charity which covers transgression and hides a multitude of sins.

Finally, while we are striving to bear our own burdens, and to sustain the faults and shortcomings of our fellow men, let us remember every day what Christ is obliged to bear in and for us. I speak out of the depths of my own experience. When, in the hour of impetuous force, when, intense and sensitive and wilful, I fain would rush on to the condemnation of a fellow man, the thought of what Christ has been obliged to bear from me always tempers the zeal of my indignation; and I say, "If Christ could bear my infirmities, ought I not to bear one of his little children's infirmities?" And so I endeavor to be to others, according to the measure of my nature, what, according to the amplitude and the glory of his nature, God is to me.

Christian brethren, take this matter home. Do not make it a matter of criticism and comment, but, say, "What shall I change in my family to-day?" Is there not something that this sermon will enable you to do for the good of your children? Is there not something in this sermon that will make husband and wife better? Are there not some states of things in your neighborhood, are there not some things in your relations to your business, or to your partners in business, or something in your relations to men round about you, that should make you a better man? Ask God to give you such a sense of your own sinfulness and blameworthiness as shall enable you to forgive those who trespass against you.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Blessed be thy name, O thou Father of all, for thine excellent goodness, and for the mercy which is over all the work of thine hands. We rejoice to believe that thine eye never slumbers. Thou art always present, unwasted by years; undiminished by age in strength; glorious in holiness; perfect in praises; without variableness or shadow of turning; the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Thou art not changed by reason of our changes. Thy promises are Yea, and Amen; and thou wilt fulfill them to the uttermost. Herein is our hope. Our own power—how soon is it diminished, as a summer brook that dries so that there is none of it! All our virtues and purposes of good are as a summer cloud, and as the early dew. Thou hast so royally endowed us that we find the burden of life in carrying all that belongs to us equally and well too great for our strength; and we are perpetually running to excess, or are diminished by lack. We come short in many things, and in many things we overact. On every side we find limitation, and imperfection, and much sin, and actual, purposed transgression. O Lord our God! if it were not for the hope of thy help, if it were not for thine own succoring spirit, if we did not float in an atmosphere of love, if we were not nourished by the yearning of thy heart we should be in despair. Nor would we lift up one endeavor. But because thou art bringing us forward from infancy to the ripeness of manhood in Christ Jesus; because as a patient Teacher thou art willing to bear with our dulness, and with our fractious disobedience; because, having loved us as a faithful Parent thou wilt love us unto the end; because thou hast made it the business of thy love to take our faults, and to bear our infirmities for the curing of them, therefore have we hope and strong confidence. We are sure of salvation; for who shall pluck us out of thine hand? and what shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Our weakness would destroy us; and our sins would submerge us; but our sins are not so mighty as thy love; and our imperfections are not able to stand against the conquering might of thy divine excellency. With thee is all power—and all power that nourishes. Thou art terrible, and to be feared; and yet, behind all fear is the everlasting flow of love. By that thou wilt redeem; by that thou wilt in the end conquer. And we rejoice in the infiniteness of thy nature, and the infinite applications of thy nature to ours; so that all of our life is but a getting ready to be born, and the earth is but the womb, and the morning of death and of the resurrection is our true birth. Thou art moulding and fashioning every part, to bring us forth into the glorious image of the true man in the heavenly state.

Grant that in all the infirmities of life, and in all its trials, we may not be so foolish as not to know that we are sons of God. Grant that we may not count our home here, and go about the tent as if that were a mansion, and look upon the wilderness as if that were our Father's garden. We are away from home so long as we are in the body and absent from the Lord. May we therefore look out of sorrow into the land of joy; out of trouble into the cloudless land; out of all sin and remorse into that blessed land where there shall be no more sin nor sorrow. If we shed tears and groan, being burdened here, may it only incite in us a conception of the blessedness of that heaven where thou shalt wipe every tear from our eyes, and where we shall go out no more forever, but be forever with the Lord. We thank thee even for glimpses of that day. We thank thee for the ineffable sense which thou dost breathe upon us of peace through forgiveness. We thank thee for thy fidelity. We thank thee for the pledges which thou art giving us evermore. Thou art still sending thy messengers to encourage us. Thou art saying to us, "This is the way." When it seems as if there were no path, when it is hidden, thine angels guide us, and our feet find it. We are never forsaken. When most we seem alone, when we seem most cast out, when we are forsaken of men, and despised of them, we are nearer to thee than ever. For it is the nature of thine heart to run first and most to those who need thee most. Thou art by those who are in extreme sorrow; by those that mourn over earthly abuses; by those who sit in darkness; by those who die for lack of vision.

And now, O Lord, we rebuke ourselves that we ever doubted thee, or counted our lives dear to us. What do we need who have thee? Why do we mourn departing riches who have riches that fade not, in the heavenly land? What matters it though we are asunder, heart from heart, if we are to be joined again in the bright land beyond, whe-

all misapprehension shall cease; where all mistakes shall end; where all alienations shall glow with endless love; where thou shalt unite again all to thee and all to each other, and they shall behold each other without spot or blemish, or any such thing? Oh! grant us faith of this glorious union beyond, and quicken our patience and our forbearance one with another here. Comfort us in all our burdens and discouragements. Lead us as little children are led by the father's hand along the rugged path of life. And may we at last win Jesus, our Mark, and Aim, and the Prize of our high calling.

We pray that thou wilt be with those who are not with us, but are of us, and whose longing thoughts brood this place. Comfort them. Heaven is open everywhere; and may they be able, from their sick couches, to take something of the joy of thy salvation. Prepare for death those that are appointed thereunto. Walk gently with them. Do not bear them as unto storms, but carry them out of storms into the land of peace, unwet with tears. Be near to all those who are to mourn and are to have the surprise of sudden and overwhelming afflictions. Grant that they may be comforted, and hold fast their faith, even as thy disciples did when thou wert taken away from them, and they were scattered as sheep without a shepherd. Remember thine elect for thine own, and remember all that are in anguish now, or are to be led into the way of sharp trial. And be with those, we beseech of thee, who see their earthly plans overturned; upon whom have fallen the tempest, whirling and sweeping away all the hopes of their life. And grant that they may not esteem themselves overthrown and destroyed because their outward good is gone, to whom remains yet God, and heaven, and country, and life, with the hope of honor and truth unharmed. Grant, we beseech of thee, that they may rise up into spirit-wealth, and that they may approve their manhood as superior to all outward circumstances.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt be with the tempted. How many are there that set snares for their fellow men! How mighty is the scope, and how cunning is the wisdom of the adversary of men's souls. Be with all those whose temptation is greater than they can bear. They are thine. Let them not fall. And if they fall, do not hate them. Let us not hate them. Lift them up. Teach us to imitate thee in lifting them up. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that that great mercy and grace which is revealed in Jesus Christ toward the lost may be revealed in some measure toward us. Oh! let not our power and prosperity make us arrogant, and cold, and set us aside from our fellow men. By that which thou gavest us, may we hear thee saying, "Freely have ye received, freely give." May we be afraid to be prospered without growing more humane, and more generous. May we dread that prosperity which hardens the heart, and makes us proud and worldly.

And so, dear Lord, dwell with us all, according to the necessities of our case. Suit thy providence to our want. Grant that we may adapt ourselves to thy providence. Lead us so long as we live safely, with a song, both by day and by night. And grant that at last, when we shall have passed through the scenes of this mortal life, and through the trial and siege of death itself, we may find heaven more than ever we thought it to be. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what thou hast reserved for those that love thee. May we find it all, and finding thee, be satisfied with thy likeness.

And to thy name, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit! shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt follow with thy blessing the word of truth and exhortation which we have spoken. Bless us in all our relations one to another. Make us more gentle. Make us more tender-hearted. May we make haste to find excuses for our neighbors, but may we be rigorous with ourselves. May we never forgive our own faults; but may we forgive the faults of everybody else. And we pray that thus we may learn to be just at home, and to be benevolent and humane abroad. So we pray that thou wouldst mould us, that we may walk among men diffusing the bounty of God's great love and kindness, making human life richer, and sweeter, and purer, and more joyful, until at last thou hast served thyself by us. And then take us home to heaven, where we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

THE COMFORTING GOD.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."—2. THESS. II. 16, 17.

There are happy and easy souls that are buoyed up by inward hopefulness and outward prosperities, who can hardly understand the need of so much being said about God's consolations, and who scarcely derive any light or comfort from those numerous passages in the word of God that to others are like water in the wilderness.

There are some, less happy, who, in themselves, in their friends, in the church, in the world, see full enough for anxiety, often for discouragement, and sometimes even for despondency.

There are many who to themselves seem to have a hard time in life; and to all such, whether this feeling be founded on reality, or upon an exaggerated sense of the troubles that they bear, the words that I have read, and such like words, must come with peculiar cheer.

There is a singular sweetness in this and similar passages, when they are regarded as voices sent down to men in their struggles through life. They are like open glades in a dark forest, where the sun lies on warm banks, the father of many flowers. And so these openings with summer in them have peculiar relish and charm to many.

There is a recognition in the word of God, of human need. There is a condescending element in truth, as in the Master. There is in it a sympathy with men that is utterly unlike nature, which has no voice of sympathy, if you interpret it from the material side, but only inflexible, immutable law, saying, "The soul that obeys shall live, and that is its own look-out; and the soul that disobeys shall die, and I do not care." Nature, as interpreted by material law, gives birth to men, throws them out, as it were, into this wilderness, and says to every one, "Let strength prevail." Life is called a "battle of existence." Men suffer. They are told, coolly, that they have broken the law

SUNDAY MORNING, NOV. 7. 1869.—LESSON: HEB. XI. 1—17. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 217, 878.

and that they must expect to suffer. Are they that enjoy always keepers of the law? That question is not often mooted. But there is with many, looking into the course of nature, a sense of its hardness and coldness—especially to all such as are on the shadowy side of its favors. And when they open the word of God, and find that God is not a governing force alone, but a tender Father, who thinks of men, and cares for their infirmities, just as a father in the household thinks of his children, and cares for their infirmities, not taking delight in those that are grown up half so much as in those that are not grown, whose very mistakes are in some sense dear to him—when they find in the revelation of God such a Being as this, it is a source of great cheer and comfort to them.

Consider this passage, then, as a revelation of God's disposition. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself." That is much, but there is more—"and God." And then, as if that word *God* would not be fruitful in their imagination—"even our Father." That brings him down and draws him very near. And as if the word *Father*, as applied to a Being who has such an immense family—the universe—were not enough, the apostle still qualifies it—"which hath loved us." And as if that declaration would require still further opening, he adds, "and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace"—breaking away the misty horizon, and giving us to see the whole sweep and strength of the coming life. But as that is something afar off, the apostle seems to go back again and show that not alone this future glory, but something nearer and more personal, is given. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

Now, if a man is comforted in his very heart, and if he is established in every "word" (in all his sayings), and in every "work" (in all his doings), what more can he have? What more can a man ask than a revelation which brings the Lord Jesus Christ near to him as his personal Friend, and God as his Father, with the promise in his hand of immortality and glory; hope through grace being brought in to comfort him, and to comfort him in the very source of his feelings, his heart—and to give him that comfort not as a mere luxury, but in such a way that it shall work out in practical forms, and establish him in the whole of his life—in all that he speaks, all that he purposes, and all that he does?

I cannot read such a passage as this without feeling that it is like a mother's putting her hand on her child's head and soothing it, and stroking down its curls, and fondling it, or putting her arms about it, and caressing it. As a mother not simply speaks, but in a thousand

winning ways carries out the words in practice, so when I read this passage, it is as though God's Spirit caressed me, and was bringing me comfort. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." It is music to me, it has been music to many, and I trust that it is music to many here.

Consider, also, the sympathy and the fatherly aspect in which God is here represented, as contrasted with the sternness and rigor of that holy God that is taught and conceived of too often. It is, to be sure, true that God is the Vindicator of truth, and that he will not spare, finally, the guilty. It is true that our God is a "consuming fire." It is true on the one hand that there is an element and that there are attributes of God which are fitted to deal with matter, with pure force, with resisting dispositions that live in groveling appetites and passions, and are unsusceptible to any higher motives, and must be roused up and stimulated by the vigor of these lower, and, I might say, physical motives. And yet, on the other hand, it is true that there is a side of God which is fitted to be preached to men in their lowest savagism, and which has a certain stimulating, rousing power. It is that view of God which is to be preached when nothing else will reach men.

How is it with a father who chides his son? First he says, "Stop, my son, and think." If that does not do, he says, "Remember that my feelings are bound up in you. I beseech of you, consider this. Take it to heart." If the boy will neither take it to head nor to heart, then the father interposes, and says, "My son, it *must* not be." And if that is not sufficient, he says, "It *shall* not be. I stand here not only to make you happy, but to make your brothers and sisters happy; and I shall not allow you to stand in the way of their happiness." He tries the child with reason, and affection, and authority; and if the child is insensible to all of these, he tries a little *physical persuasion;* and that brings the child to.

How was it? The child was living, as it were, down so low in his nature that he was susceptible to no other than a physical motive; and this alternative motive was ready when nothing else would do. It was the most desperate remedy.

It is so with God. The fullness, the blossom of his nature resides up in the realm of intelligence and moral excellence and affection; and if men only know how to pluck the fruit of the higher life, they shall always be dealt with by gentleness, and sweetness, and caressing tenderness: but, rather than that they should perish, God interposes his authority, and says, "I will by no means clear the guilty. He that sins, let him do it at his peril." And if this does not turn the man, then God

is a "consuming fire" to him. God meets him at every step and stage of the way down, and at every point in his organization, with the appropriate stimulus which belongs to the condition that he may happen to be in.

That which is the best adapted to the human condition is God's favor. When Moses said, "God, show me thy glory," God refused to show him his glory in the sense in which he thought of it—that is, with the scenic outflash of all creation, revealing angels trooping about the throne, and exhibiting all the manifestations of divine power. Moses thought to see wonderful visions; but God said, "I will show you my *goodness*." It is as if God rebuked the false notion which Moses had, and, pointing to his goodness, said, "This is my glory."

What is God's goodness? "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin." Although he brought up the end, by saying, "and that will by no means clear the guilty," you see there was but one clause of that, while all the other branches and twigs of the the sentence were of mercy and goodness.

If God were permitted to be good to you all the time, he never would be anything else. He is severe only when you need severity. It is not for the sake of gratifying any desire to inflict pain that he administers chastisement, but to fulfill the declaration, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

It is this view of God that men need—especially in communities like ours, where they have been trained to conceive of God as the Guardian of the law, which he is; as perfectly holy, which he is; as lifted infinitely above human weakness and imperfection, which he is; as an ideal and abstraction of everything that is sublime and noble, which he is. When you come to make use of your God, and you only have a God that is an abstraction, how cold, how vapory, how remote he seems! The vaster he is, the less tangible and the less useful he becomes. When you conceive of God simply as a being that is holy, and that looks upon sin with abhorrence, you cannot draw near to him. Fear stands between you and him. What men need in their discouraged state, is the view of a God who, though holy, though ideally perfect, and though infinitely lifted up above all imperfections of every kind, is nevertheless a Father in tenderness, in gentleness, in sweetness, and in persevering and patient industry of recovery. What men need is the view of a God who, though he never experienced sin, knows every inflection of it, every approach of it, every proportion of it, every complication of it, and every excuse for it: and knows it, not to hate, but as a

benevolent physician knows the disease of his patient, to cure it; or as a kind teacher knows the fault of his pupil, to eradicate it; or as a parent knows the ugly temper of his child, to overcome it, and loves the child, sometimes, almost in proportion to that ugliness. This view of God which presents him as the all-helpful One, not separating himself from sinners, but giving them power to come back to him, is the view that gives cheer and comfort, and is the one given in our text.

Consider the hopeful, genial spirit which one acquires by familiarity with such a view of his Father as this. If we were left in this life to fight our own battle alone; if we were placed in the midst of natural laws only, and left to obey them as best we could, I do not understand how we could have much moral buoyancy.

Ancient literature is divided into two parts. There is on one side the jeering, scoffing literature of men that had no moral feeling; but on the other hand, almost universally we find that literature has a strain of sadness running through it. The problem of human life, of development in society—the kingdom of God on earth, in other words—appeared to them so mysterious, and so obscure, that there is an undertone to the highest literature of the unenlightened world; and it is a tone that has found a response, I suppose, in almost every reflective man's bosom.

If you look into this world, and see that men were born almost as animals; that there is no revelation of what nature is; that the race has been obliged to grope for knowledge as to the very first laws of existence; that they did not even know the composition of the air which they breathed, and which was indispensable to them; that they were under the necessity of carrying a multiplex machine whose health and condition depended on a thousand circumstances which were not made known to them; that they have been stumbling upon diseases which no knowledge was given them to foresee or avoid; that through ages they have sought, groaning and suffering, to find out facts essential to their safety and comfort; that their life has been spent in studying to ascertain what the heavens mean, and what the earth means, having been obliged to find out these things for themselves, while, if there was a God, he sat in grim silence behind the cloud, and looked on with unconcern—if you behold human life from this side, it is dismal beyond conception. Under such circumstances, the world seems like a dungeon, men seem like prisoners, and God seems like a jailor, who watches the bolt and key, and puts bread and water through the grates for them, and lets them alone. Wherefore we find in Jesus Christ a revelation of the paternity of God, coming in to relieve this agonizing suspense, this terrific strife, which disturbs men's thoughts in respect to the economies of nature. And when God is

represented in our text as Father, how full of cheer and consolation is the view which is presented!

This view of comfort which is contained in our text, may be carried out in many particulars. Christian life is ordained to comfort us in our struggles, for instance, with fear. "Fear hath torment." It is a tormentor. It haunts men, night and day. Great fears may come seldom; but the poison emery, the dust of fear, comes in, as it were, at every crevice, and settles down upon every fair thing in life. There are innumerable petty fears. There are ten thousand little hauntings. How full is life of fear which takes away from men the enjoyment of their prosperity! Fear stands by the cradle, and threatens the mother; and all her love and thankfulness cannot make her happy while fear scowls and threatens. The spectre of fear hovers between lovers, and they dread and suffer. It shoots like a meteor along the twilight meditations of evening. It hides the sun at noonday with clouds. It threatens health with sickness, and sickness with death, and death with numberless terrors. Cares are the offspring of fear. They sting like noxious insects in tropical nights. Fear discourages poverty. It takes ease away from riches. It is the persecutor of ambition. It is the parasite of conscience. It plants upon conscience its own evil growth, until sometimes conscience is but an inquisitor, with a whip of scorpions. Fear perpetually exaggerates. It is always changing, and coming up in new forms, and always dread forms. It is full of illusions. All the way through it is undermining, undermining, undermining, the joys and hopes of life. And all this, too, in the realm where Christ has been revealed. Go from house to house and mark down how large a play there is of fear; how much of motive is fear; how largely men work for fear of more suffering than they choose to have. And see how men are restrained by fear, standing in the place of conscience. See how fear is like broken glass, every particle of which cuts the foot that treads on it. How is fear the destroyer of men's peace, perpetually rasping them, and beating them with small whips, or large ones; as the case may be. One would think that the name of the God who governs this world was Fear.

Right over against the gloomy face of fear stands the Lord Jesus Christ, and these words of ineffable cheer: "Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts!" That is just what hearts that are sick want—*comfort;* and they have it in Christ Jesus, and in the fatherhood of God, and nowhere else, in such measure, or with such pertinency of application.

Consider, too, the discouragements which men endure from an exacting conscience. How numberless they are! Conscience gives to

life a certain rigor which makes it almost fruitless of joy. Men wrestle with their conscience, and throw it off entirely, and then it acts only as a remorse. If conscience is active, and men are looking out beforehand for the path of duty, what infinite anxieties does it excite! And when, from day to day, men measure their real life by their ideal of life, what numberless sorrows does it bring! What discouragements do men feel who are living by conscience! One's ideal is forever rising, and conduct never keeps pace with duty. There is, therefore, always this fatal discord between the ideal and the real. And if a man is attempting to live by conscience, he is going through that struggle which is described in the 7th of Romans. He would fain do good. The law, the rule of goodness, is holy and just. He loves it "after the inward man." His reason approves it, and his moral sentiments approve it, and he strives after it. But, when he would do good, *evil is present with him.* And this is the experience of every man who is attempting to live by his conscience.

Then comes the declaration, "God, your Father, who has loved you, and given you hope of immortality, will also comfort you in this very strife and struggle of your conscience."

Contrast this summery cheerfulness, this happiness of the apostle's exhortation, with that desolateness which springs up in men who look out upon spiritual life at large, as a part of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in this world. How disconsolate the cause of God has often seemed among men! The force of society is so strong, the force of custom is so strong, the strifes of life are so strong, and the lower animal passions are so immeasurably stronger than the moral sentiments and the reason, that, when men think that it is a part of the divine economy, and that the duty is incumbent upon each one to bring up that kingdom in "which dwelleth righteousness," and that right over against this kingdom is a gulf stream of corruption, they are disconsolate at the work. They say, "There is no use. The little that a man can do bears no proportion to the vast wilderness that grows with rampant luxuriance in iniquity."

What if a man should attempt to reclaim all the land on the globe, the earth being his farm? What if he should undertake to drain all the marshes, enrich all the deserts, subdue all low and untractable ground, and put in the plow, and bring to harvest the toll of every acre of ground? What a discouraging business that would be! When a man had worked, and put other men to work, as much as he could, he would not have clipped the fringes of the forests, even. His work would be contemptible, in comparison with the task he had set out to perform. If a man has five hundred acres; if he has half of that; yes, if he has a hundred acres, or even half of that, he has all that he can

properly cultivate. If he is a good farmer, ten acres are enough. But if a man should attempt to take in the whole globe, and eradicate the rocks, and subdue the wildernesses, and cleanse the soil of all noxious things, and plant good seed, and give them the sun and air which they need, and to do it in his life-time, or any considerable part of it, would it not damp his enterprise and discourage his industry?

Yet that is easy compared with bringing up the race on the globe to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the sweetness of that love which is breathed by Christ on the human soul. When you look upon the work of God in regenerating a single human soul, it is multitudinous; it is infinite. And when men go from the individual to the household, and from the household to the neighborhood, and from the neighborhood to the village, and from the village to the city, and from the city to the state, and from the state to the nation, and from the nation to all nations, and look upon the cause of God everywhere, and think, "This is the work which is purposed of God in the truth, and by his providence, and his grace, and every one of us is enlisted in it, as soldiers, teachers, husbandmen, laborers in God's vineyard," they are discouraged. They say, "The declaration of Christ that *the field is the world*, must be a figure of speech." And how few people there are who hang over the globe, and take in the ages, as Christ did, feeling for men, and bearing them in the bosom of his care and thought! How many there are that look out upon the great work of God in this world,—the work that is dear to him, and the work that must come to pass,—as a child, in a stormy evening, from the fisher's cottage door, looks upon the thundering sea, and the scowling heavens, and dares not go out, but shudders, and shuts the door, and sets himself down in his own little quiet nook! And when men attempt this work, how discouraged they become! How they need, above all other things, a strengthening faith, a cheerful hope, and a sense of God present, and omnipotent in goodness, to bring confidence to their discouragement!

But more familiar, perhaps, and universal, are the sadnesses which spring up in our domestic, our economic, our secular life. The whole economy of labor, of weariness, of ill-health, of straitened circumstances, of poverty, of strifes, of misunderstandings, of apprehensions, of anxiety as to what we shall eat and drink and wear; the conflict of friends; the annoyances which are occasioned by the falling out of others around about us; the ten thousand misadventures, no one of which is much in itself, but which in the mass are, like a cloud of dust, annoying—these come in to destroy our peace. And how many there are who, week by week, think of the Sabbath day as a vacation from care!

There are many that walk well-clad, and in velvet, whose way is easy, and who have no anxieties as to their life; and yet, within the sound of their voice are scores and hundreds who awake from uneasy dreams, saying, "Give me this day my daily bread." You do not know what scope there is in that petition of the Lord's Prayer. You do not know how many there are who look upon their children and put a mother's heart into that prayer, and send it throbbing before God—"Give us this day our daily bread." You do not know how many there are to whom fear comes as a barbed arrow from the bow of poverty. You do not know how many are goaded by duty. You do not know how many there are in this congregation who thank God that he has given them a dress sufficient to enable them to sit in the midst of his people unwatched and unrebuked. You do not know what a fight is going on in the lives of many. There are lions and bears and tigers in the wilderness and in the desert; but I tell you there are no such wild beasts as those which are in men's houses and spheres of life. There are ten thousand misunderstandings, and quarrels, and misapprehensions, which, mingled in life's cup, make it bitter; and men drink it to the very dregs.

All is not as fair as it seems. And when our streets are swept and garnished, I sometimes walk in them as in a vain show, and say to myself, "Why need men go to theatres? What dramas there are here!" Every house is a stage where plays are enacted. The old saying is that *there is a skeleton in every house.* A skeleton? There are a hundred of them in some houses, that stalk all night and walk all day, in the form of miseries and troubles and trials—and that among persons who call themselves Christians. How few there are that are sweet-tempered! How few there are that are serene! How few there are that know what *peace* means, even for one hour! How few there are that have the mark of God on their brow, and in their eye! How few there are who carry with them the summer of faith and the serenity of victory! How few there are that carry the presence of God with them! How few there are that are really happy!

Now, in the midst of this vast and ever-unwearied breaking of the surge on the shore of experience, how cheerful, how joyous are the words of God! There is one reason why the Bible will never be upset just as long as the world lasts. You may prove to me that there is no such thing as inspiration; you may prove that this Book was dug out of a rock; you may destroy the prophets' authority; you may take from the apostles their authority; you may take away the theory that the Bible came in any sense from God. Yet there is that in this Book which will keep it intact and make it potential as long as there is a heart to feel sorrow or to beat with hope. It is its humanity

It is its courage. It is the might and power of its love. It is the vast sympathy which wraps mankind as the atmosphere wraps the globe. It is its thought and care for men in all their wants. For the poor, the needy, the weak, the helpless, the crying, the sighing, the discouraged, the down-trodden, the unvictorious, the captives, little children, mighty monarchs, peasants, nobles—for all men—there is here a throb and a yearning. There are thousands of blessings held out to them—strength, bread, fruit, water, wine, swords, spears—everything for humanity—whatever they need in their masterly struggles in this world. This Book is an ark into which men will run, as long as the world stands, for succor and consolation. And who should have made such a Book as this, as a way cast up on which "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads," if it be not God?

Let me read you some of these very points of encouragement from this Book. Listen to a few words from the 49th chapter of Isaiah:

Zion said, "The Lord hath hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

Oh! how many have felt that God had forsaken them! How many have mourned and felt that the heavens over them were brass, and that the earth was as the ashes of the burnt wilderness!

Now hear the answer:

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

What is it in the journey, what is it in the *bivouac*, what is it on the field where the wounded are weltering in their blood, that one last looks upon? There in the hand is the little daguerreotype of the wife and children. The last gaze is on that. And the Lord says, "Your portrait is graven on my hands. I carry it on my palms, ever before me. I never lift up my hands to the stars that I do not see it. I never stretch out my hands to fulfill the decrees of omnipotence, that that picture does not fall upon my eyes."

Think what language this is to come from the lips of the Crowned Head of the universe. Think what comfort and cheer there is in it.

Look at these other words in the 40th chapter of Isaiah. You do not read Isaiah half enough. There are great things in that book.

"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"

How many of you that have come down to the great city, and wandered lonesome along the streets, have said, "There is no person living, that I know of, who cares for me. If I were to die to-morrow, nobody would shed a tear over me. I am alone in the world, and there is nobody to think of me!" But hear the word of the Lord:

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no search

ing of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

These are but single blossoms plucked out from whole trees full that abound in this garden of the Lord.

Consider, next, some of the methods of comfort which experience has revealed to us. When, in our struggle of Christian life, we are discouraged at our own pride and selfishness; when we are discouraged because we make so little head against our temper, because our passions seem not to be overcome, or weakened only by the changes of life and the progress of old age; when we look at ourselves, and our whole way of life, and are discouraged thereby, how much sweetness and beauty and comfort and encouragement there frequently is in the beautiful lives of others! We look upon one and another, and feel that to look upon them is a renewal of our faith—the embodiment of Christian peace and serenity. One single Christian in a neighborhood, I had almost said, is enough. You do not want a light-house at every point on the shore. One every few leagues is sufficient to point out the way. It would be better, of course, if light-houses were multiplied so as to cast daylight over all the night scene; but one here and there on prominent points saves men. It would be better if whole households lived in a serene and beautiful Christian faith; but one faithful servant in a household may save it. I have seen the slave-woman whose fidelity was the means of the conversion of William Wirt—that eminent Richmond lawyer. I have known of cases in which slaves carried salvation to whole plantations. I have known domestic servants that lived such disinterested and beautiful lives, that members of the household were converted through the influence of their example. The blossoms are not always on the tops of the trees. They are sometimes on the branches that are down near the ground. I have seen aunts, I have seen maiden sisters, I have seen plain sewing women, I have seen the lowest in poverty, who stood with such erect, sweet, pure, heavenly-mindedness, that it was worth a man's while to go and look at them, to renew his own faith in himself. Men are frequently comforted and cheered by the exemplary lives of those who are living in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes I have heard these same people say that it was a mystery to them that God should have debarred them from the usefulness that they longed for; that they should have been made obscure; that they should have no tongue for speaking. I laugh at them! Do you suppose that when a honeysuckle blossoms, and its fragrance goes abroad, it has any idea how far it goes? It leaves the blossom, and the

stem and vine know no more about it. It is wafted by the wind. It is sent through all the neighborhood. And the blossom does not know how it sheds its sweetness everywhere. It is unconscious. Do you suppose a candle in an eminent place knows how much light it sends out, or how many see it? Do you suppose a star knows what is said about it? It, too, is unconscious. And it is the unconscious power of a symmetrical Christian life and character that is the very richness and power of it, frequently.

So, too, the victorious issue of tried souls is a comfort to those who are in the trial. When, on a hard fought field, the shout goes up on either wing, those that are in the centre, and are well nigh overcome, hearing it, know that there is victory on some part of the field, and take courage, and redouble their blows, and press forward. Oftentimes the comfort that comes from seeing others victorious, brings victory to us.

Oh! to see men that have been much tried get through safely; to stand by men who feared death, and see them go into the river to find that all fear is taken away from them; to question them as they go deeper and deeper, and hear them say, "I fear no evil;" to hear their voices after we lose them from sight; to hear the rustle of vague sounds, as of heavenly music from that exceeding throng on the other side, that bear them victoriously home—this gives comfort. Can any man stand and witness the departure of a man from this life, and his victory over death, without feeling more fortitude, more faith and more courage for his own battle? No man ever went through where there was tremendous odds against him, and gained a victory for himself, that he did not gain a victory for multitudes besides. We do not know when we are fighting for ourselves, how many battles we are fighting for others, too. A man who has overcome temper, or passion, or avarice; a man who has brought his whole life out on a Christian plane, and has been a captain and not a private, is made a leader of multitudes beside; and all that look upon him feel that God is establishing their hearts in the way of virtue.

In this way it is that we derive great consolation from looking back through the lives of holy men. There is a picture gallery opened in the 11th of Hebrews. Paul's picture gallery it is. In England, a great while ago, a national gallery was gotten up; and all the kings (the poorest they had), and nobles, and literary characters, and scientists, and what not, had a place in it. It was a very good and noble thing. If we were to begin now it would not cost us much, because there are not many that we would need to collect in our day; but this establishing a gallery which presents to the eye pictures of men who have achieved and done worthily is a glorious conception. Paul set up one,

and gathered all the poor and needy, and those that were counted unworthy of honor, and set them around about this magnificent chapter—more magnificent than any other, except the next one to it. I like to go round, as Paul did, and look upon them, and think how they suffered, and what they achieved, and how long their power has lasted There too are the singers, and they are singing still. David was never so musical as to-day. There are the wise and the philosophic. The Proverbs of Solomon were never so fitting as to day. There are the sublime old teachers and statesmen indeed—the prophets that attempted to found commonwealths on moral ideas. They were never so wise, and their wisdom was never so much in place, as to-day. There are all those men that were hewn, and exiled, and driven out in the olden time.

Now, let us open a Christian gallery, and take all men that have been martyrs; all men that, for the sake of maintaining truth, have left home and country, and lived in mountains and caves; all men that have exiled themselves, and wasted their lives in dungeons and hospitals; all men that have stood patiently in their lot, and suffered, and died, and gained their victory, and gone to glory. I look upon the portraits of these men, and say, "That grace which has carried every one of them through, can carry me through." That grace which made a saint out of so tumultuous a nature as Peter; that grace which could take such a nature as John's, who invoked fire on the heads of the villagers because they would not receive Christ, and make it so sweet that it was saccharine: that grace which transformed the most fiery temper, and took away the desire for vengeance from men, can subdue the hardness and obduracy of our hearts.

We are not the first men who have been on God's forge. He has had thousands on his anvil before. He knows the infliction of every instrument, and how to temper every blow. It is the same blessed God that is workman still. And when I look upon the virtues of those old saints, and the victories that are occurring now, from day to day, I am comforted and cheered.

Once more, God comforts by the peculiar comforting effect which there is in his soul resting on ours. Christian brethren, do you believe in the Holy Ghost? Do you believe that God's sun actually comes into contact with the lily, and pours it full, warms it, and changes it? Do you believe that the Holy Ghost shines down into the souls of men that open themselves to its influence? I do. I believe it is the intrinsic nature of God, shining into the soul that receives it, to bring to it light, and warmth, and hope, and cheer, and comfort unspeakable.

And that is not the whole of it. As it is the nature of some things to be bitter and the nature of other things to be sweet, so it is the na-

ture of God's spirit to bring to souls that peace which is called one of the "fruits of the Spirit." Do not you know how diversely different people affect you—even good people? Some persons are so sad that when you go into their presence they draw you down; and when you leave them you feel that you have wasted sympathy. Others are so rigidly conscientious that when you go into their presence you feel overstrained, and keyed up in that direction. Some people seem to suck sympathy out of you, when you are with them, so that when you leave them you are as a sponge that has been squeezed in the hand till there is no water in it. But now and then you find a person who, instead of affecting you in any of these ways, soothes, sweetens and cheers you, and makes you feel better, and more hopeful. Blessed are those persons into whose presence we go rejoicing, and out of whose presence you come still more joyful. And, as I have said, it is the quality of God's soul, when it comes down into ours, to fill it with peace—that peace "which passeth all understanding:" not the peace of indolence; not a supine peace, but that peace which means the harmony of every faculty raised to the highest point of normal excitement. Perfect harmony—that is the peace which God brings to us when he comes into our souls. And oh, how full of hope and comfort is this view!

Let me not close in my own words, but in the language of sacred writ.

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now, the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Ye that have to-day come into the church of Christ, and entered upon the Christian life, do not look upon it as a life of storms. It has its struggles; but it has its Christ, that walks on the waves, and rebukes the storm. Do not suppose that it is a life of mere luxury, according to the secular idea. It is a life of duty. It is a life of labor in the cause of Him who makes labor sweet, and says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for my yoke is easy and my burden light."

May God cheer you. May God comfort you. May God bear you through life with such cheer and comfort that, by-and-by, you, in turn, may console others with the consolation wherewith you are comforted.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

O Lord our God, we thank thee that thou hast gathered, in every age, seed to serve thee. Although but a handful, at times, have been faithful to thy name and cause, thou hast been a defence to them. Thou hast enlarged their numbers. Thou hast through them spread abroad a knowledge of the truth. Through them thou hast made known thy power among the nations of the earth. We rejoice that still there are so many tokens of thy presence among men. We rejoice that thou art gathering these brotherhoods—these churches—of thine own children; and that thou art manifesting thyself among them, comforting them, strengthening them, purifying them, and making their life to be a guiding light to many wandering souls. We thank thee that from time to time so many are brought in, housed from the storm, and succored in their extreme peril and distress; and that they take upon them the name of Christ, and become obedient children to him. We thank thee that so many are walking comfortably in our midst, with so many, and such strong hopes, founded upon the faithfulness of thy promises. We thank thee that thou hast ministered to them such consolations and such victories in times of conflict. We thank thee that there are so many witnesses in our midst, that thy word is yet powerful, that thou art gracious, and that thou dost forgive sins, and renew the heart, and translate those that were thine enemies into the kingdom of thy dear son, and make them heirs and children.

And now we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon those who are gathered into our number to-day. We pray that if they have come from sister churches, they may take this occasion to renew their consecration of themselves; to review all the way in which thou hast led them; to make mention of thy mercies in times past, and to take courage for the time to come. May they not abide among us fruitless, but may they bring forth much fruit to the glory of God. And we pray that thou wilt take into thy fatherly care and keeping those dear ones who are now gathered in from the world, and upon whom now rests the sacred name of Jesus for the first time. The prayers of beloved parents are answered in them. Thou hast shown mercy; and we pray that now they may be encircled by the arms of thy mercy, that they may neither stumble nor fall. And wilt thou multiply to them far above their expectation the joy and the peace which there is in believing. We beseech of thee that they may walk worthy of that high vocation by which they are called. We pray that others may be brought in by them. May there be many that shall like thyself go out to seek and to save men.

We pray that thou wilt revive thy work upon every hand. In our families, in all the relations which we sustain, may we be preachers of the Gospel to every one around about us, silently, by our example, and, at fit times and opportunities, by word of mouth. May the name of Jesus Christ be heard in our midst.

Comfort, O Lord Jesus! those that are in the shadow. To those that sit in the region and shadow of death, be thou very gracious and very near. Be with all that wrestle with hardness and poverty. Be with those that are sodden with care. Draw near to those who are discouraged by any event and circumstance in their lives. Breathe thy peace upon all that are troubled.

Grant, we pray thee, that there may be a fresh and joyful recognition in multitudes of hearts, to-day, of thy power to save not only in death, but in life. We pray that thou wilt draw thy people so near to thee that they shall not seem as beggars' children, but as, what they are, sons of God. And though their raiment is vile, may they clothe themselves in thy righteousness. Though they have no bread but that which perisheth, may they reach up and take that bread which thou dost give, even thine own self. And we pray that thou wilt grant that in Christian living there may be more and more joy; more and more strength; more and more victory; more and more beauty in the eyes of the world.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt succor those that are wandering. Bring back those

* Immediately following the reception of members into the Church

that are backsliding. Rescue any that are in danger of apostacy. Return them to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. And may the way of holiness seem more and more to men the way of honor and of peace. And grant that there may be multitudes who shall throng it.

Oh! bring in the latter day glory which thou hast promised. Hasten the time when all nations shall know thee. May wars cease, and confusions and turmoils and revolutions pass away. May that sun rise which shall have no setting, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—PHIL. II. 9.

A name is a call-word, by which we separate objects, and give to each its identity. The names of familiar objects, however, are not simply arbitrary signs used for separation and designation. In an important way they become symbols of quality and attribute. This is seen in the picture which rises to the mind on the use of a name. The word *eagle*, *horse*, or *lion* being spoken, a picture springs up to the eye of the imagination. Let a foreign name for the same thing be used, and no picture rises, although the foreign name certainly discriminates and separates. *Apple* brings before the minds of giddy English-speaking boys a very clear picture, although *pomme* does not. *Homo* once had a picture in it, but not now; although *man* has. There is a silent process that goes on by which in life we are storing up, as it were, in a name, the qualities of the thing that is named, so that the word pronounced is like the opening of a book of record, and the showing of the contents of things. Different words, therefore, have different magnitudes, and different degrees of richness of contents, according to the attributes of the thing to which they are attached.

We see this more strikingly in the names of men than in the names of things. A whole village of people, at least to those who know the villagers well, have their portraits in their names. One might institute a game with lively children of some imagination and quick fancy, letting each describe what rose up to his eye as a name was called—what he saw physically. As A was called, there would be a vision, for instance, of one tall, thin and crooked; as B was called, of one fat and lazy; as C was called, of one short and dumpy. And so, one after another, ungainliness, or beauty, or symmetry would instantly be found to be touched in a child's mind by the pronouncing of a given name. Or, if one older were questioned, the different names would

SUNDAY MORNING, Nov. 14, 1869.—LESSON: Rev. V. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 132, 381, 551.

bring out, instantly, social and economic qualities. One man would be generous, and another stingy; one would be high-minded, and another only "so so;" one would be good, and another mean. You would find that connected with the name was not merely the outward physical history of the man, but also a certain element of his character. And those who were still wiser, would go further and deeper. They would see dispositional and moral elements in the man. His faith, his zeal, his genius, his reflective qualities, would be stored up in the name by which he was called, to many. So that a name to those that know but little, means but little; to those that know more, it means more; and to those that know most, it is encyclopedaic.

Still further, we see that personal names stand for abstract qualities and excellences. Thus, *lover*, *friend*, *father*, *child*, *mother*, *sister*, *nurse*—these terms, although they are often applied to definite persons, have an abstract office. They all go to signify to us domestic qualities—dispositional elements. When the word *mother* is spoken, not only does your mother come forth to your imagination in feature and in person, but those qualities which make all mothers differ from other relations—from sister, and nurse, and brother—are suggested to your mind.

By the extension of such a practice it is that names come to signify not only persons but historic qualities. *Socrates* has almost no personality—at any rate, to those who have never seen his face; but he signifies philosophic, common sense. *Plato* means pure thought and imagination; *Demosthenes*, eloquence; *Cato*, stern integrity; *Nero*, cruelty; *Napoleon*, military genius; *Washington*, patriotism; *Howard*, philanthropy; *Garibaldi*, the friend of the common people. Men thus, after a little, as it were, outgrow their personality, and their name comes to signify some abstract virtue, or vice, as the case may be.

Thus we see that a name, after a little, is not a simple word, or a dead sign, but a symbol, a living thing, full of power, and full of suggestiveness, carrying in it, so to speak, the qualities of the thing to which it has been attached. And when applied to active beings, it at length epitomizes in itself their history, their character, and becomes a store-house of memories, suggestions and imaginations.

Now, when it is said that the name of Jesus shall yet rise above every name, there is a scope to the meaning of it, and there is a grandeur in the sentiment, which it requires some reflection to bring out for, certainly, it is not simply saying that he shall have a name that is higher on the list. We are to give to the term *name* as applied to him its full proportions and richness and grandeur of meaning. Already it is seen to be fulfilled, that Christ's name is in fact above that

of any and all earthly historical personages. There is not one that we can summon from the great family of the Hebrews—venerable men, patriarchs, prophets, teachers, apostles—who, standing by the side of Christ, has a name that produces upon the imagination or upon the heart the effect which his name produces. The sum of their life is small, a mere pittance, compared with the magnitude of Christ's life—and that, too, in the thought of the common soul.

If you gather together the witnesses and the martyrs that have lived in every age since the Master lived—the great men and the nobles, of whom the world was not worthy; the men that died in prisons, by the rack, and at the stake; the men that followed their Master through suffering unto death—there is not one name of them all that is not dwarfed by the side of the name of Jesus. There is not one of them that has his calmness, his simplicity, his depth, his spiritual fervor and foresightedness, his essential divinity. There is not one that has the compass of being which all of us perceive in him.

If you go from the best specimens of men to philosophers, to poets, to scholars who have developed on the Greek side—on the side of reason, that is—I need not say that whatever admiration is bestowed upon them, no one would dream that their name was to be mentioned by the side of Him of Nazareth and of Calvary. Artists, benefactors, the crowd of great men that have adorned and enriched and blessed the world—multitudes there have been of them; but they are each and all of them unspeakably inferior to Christ in the conception of men. In the very thought and feeling of the race, they are below the name of Jesus. Cite any single name from any department of life, and put the name of Christ by it, and it goes out in a moment, as a star goes out when the sun rises.

Names, I have said, become types of function, and insignia of honor. Thus, there are judges' names that signify perfect justice. There are names of princes and kings that signify authority, splendor and power. There are names of generals that signify great skill and capacity. But has the world stored up in any of these names such associations as belong to the name of Christ Jesus? Is there anywhere out of Christ such a conception of justice, such imperialness, such sovereignty, as there is in him? Is government anywhere set forth in colors so serene and pure, so august and rightful, as in him? Is there anywhere else, in all those names that signify authority, power and government, such paternity as there is in the name of Jesus Christ? Already his name stands higher for the very qualities which go to make courts illustrious; for the very things that make men glorious in history. Once, a culprit, under the hand of Rome, which reached through the whole earth, he died, despised and rejected of men, and

made his grave with the wicked; but now, all through the world, those governments and those potentates that do not acknowledge and worship the Son are feeble and barbarous. The wheel has turned around. Power was with paganism when Christ was upon the earth: power is to-day with Christianity; and in all the government in all the world where power really inheres, it is true that that name is, ostentatiously often, but whether ostentatiously or not, really, placed higher than any other; and he is to-day King of kings and Lord of lords.

But there is even a more important matter of comparison. I mean the names of chief power on the heart—heart-names. In each quality which makes the dearest names in human life, Christ so excels that he is infinitely above all others. We think of our Saviour as above us, and as occupied with infinite government—which to most minds is infinite abstraction. We are not accustomed to weave into that name all those sweet, familiar attributes which we see in the household, or which we meet in a circle of friends; and yet, in respect to every one of those qualities which go to make names that are dear to the heart, the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely above them, infinitely superior to them, in everything. All the love and authority which there is in *father*, even in the most eminent instances, and in ideal instances, is so dark, compared with that special element in the Lord Jesus Christ, that it could scarcely appear by its side. Christ is more in those very qualities which make a father dear to his children, or a neighbor noble to his neighbors, than any or all fathers or neighbors. He is infinite in those things. All those indescribable and tender graces which make *mother* the queenly name in all the earth, Christ has in such abundance and perfectness, that a mother's heart by the side of his would be like a taper at mid-day. All that which the child yearns for while a child, and remembers with home-sickness afterwards, when grown up; all those qualities that make men look back for their paradise to their childhood, and make them feel, too often, that life is a wilderness, and their early homes the place of love and joy and sweet fruition, are not so dominant in father and mother as they are in Jesus. He is more fatherly than fathers, and more motherly than mothers. He is more tender in love than any lover ever knew how to be. Language is squandered and exhausted in the Bible to signify the inflections of divine tenderness. No love-letter that ever was written, or could be written, could compare with what can be gathered out of the Old and New Testaments, describing the inflections of divine love toward men. There is no such literature known as that which shines and glows in the word of God, to express love in all its infinite inflections.

The enduring intimacy of exalted love in true wedlock carries up our conception of possible happiness to the very gate of heaven; but

when we have carried it to the uttermost, at the gate of heaven there comes, as it were, the out-bursting light of that mystic love of Christ to his church, which rides higher than poetry can follow, and higher than experience ever went, or will go, until the spirit is ransomed and meets its Lord.

So that if you take all the names that we know in history of eminent men; or all the names that signify official power and government; or all names of domesticity: if you take those names that are the boldest, the fullest, and richest, and strongest, and noblest; if you take those names that the heart most leans upon, already the name of Christ is above every one of them.

This world is but an outhouse of creation. We have not yet seen the whole. What barns are to mansions, that this world is to heaven. What animals are to men, that men are to the superior beings of the heavenly world. When we have carried these suggestions from the realm of experience up to the line of the invisible and imagined, we shall find that the name of Christ is superior to them. There are declarations in the word of God that that name which has risen above every name here, rises there again. For there are beings that rise not only higher than men in wisdom, power, goodness, delightfulness, and companionableness, but there is a gradation among them. There are dominions, and thrones, and powers, and principalities in long succession. As we find long successions of natures among men, and below them still longer successions, all the way down through creation, so we have intimations in the word of God that this concatenation is continued, and goes up; and we are told that over all these Christ rises—not by arbitrary ranking, not by force, but by the intrinsic grandeur of his nature; by the essential grace and beauty of his disposition. And because he is "Chief among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely;" because he is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the bright and morning star," he sits upon the Throne coequal with the Eternal.

And yet, the name of Christ is a hidden name. Yet, it is a name undisclosed. Far above everything that is named upon earth, and far above everything that is named in heaven, which is at all understood, his name still goes on. And not until we are there—nor then, until ages have rolled around and given us an experience—shall we know what is the might, and what is the height, and what is the depth, and what is the length, and what is the breadth, and what is the universal glory of that name which is above every other name.

In view of this exposition, I remark,

1. Every one must form for himself a picture or a name of his God. It must be made up, too, out of the things which his heart

can appreciate. You cannot find your God in the Bible, or in the catechism. I might stand at the threshold of these, the most sacred symbols or books known to man, and say to you as the angels said to the early disciples at the sepulchre, "I know whom ye seek; but he is not here." No man can learn his God out of a book. Out of nothing but his own experience can he learn it. Every man who has a God that is more than an empty name, has one that has been framed out of the actual conceptions and thoughts and feelings of his own nature. Little children fashion a God, sometimes full of fantasy, and sometimes full of sweet beauty; and it is their God, and all the God there is to them. Every man must take that which is in him, and for himsnlf frame a name that is to him God. When you read in God's word of justice, what you know of justice, and what you think about justice, will determine what that element is, as it enters into the framing of your God. If God be "holy, and just and good;" if he be "long-suffering," and "plenteous in mercy," what do these names taken out of the sacred Scripture mean? To a bad man, very little; to a good man, a great deal more; to a sainted man, still more. And if any man has a conception of God that touches his heart, and calls out his fervor and his self-denial, and makes him heroic, and fills him with joy, and with a wholesome sorrow, it is because he has the power given him to fashion a God that to him means something, in the same sense that his own experience means something.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—that is to say, the truth of which this is, as it were, the specification, is, that out of his own heart a man gains the material by which he is to fashion to himself a conception of God that is vital and imaginatively visible and potential upon his life; so that it is in vain to suppose that God is revealed to men. He is revealed so far as history reveals him; but your power to understand history depends upon the development of your nature. He is revealed so far as words and definitions can reveal him; but it is not possible for words and definitions to do more than give hints and symbolizations.

The guide-board stands pointing down the road, and saying, "This is the way: walk ye in it;" but that guide-board cannot describe the scenery that lies along the road. The medical book can give prescriptions for certain symptoms; but the medicine is not in the book. It is outside of the book. And the Bible is a medicine-book. The medicine is not in it, but the prescription is. The experiences of truth are not in the Bible; but the indices of truth, the pointings of it, are there. The experiences you must find outside of that Book. You might as well have a mythological God, you might as well have the God of Rome, as to have the God of the Westminster Catechism, or the God

of the New Testament, if it has not been quickened by something that is in you; if it has not been in some way awakened, and brought into personal consciousness in yourself, and then taken out and fashioned again, so that it is a living Being to you.

Therefore, most men have no God. Most men are either idolaters or atheists. They worship some conception that is sensuous, and call it God. But calling it God does not make it God. There are multitudes of men who still cling to fetiches, although they are called Christians, or religious persons.

As I have already said, a man is to fashion his God out of himself. If you do not know how to love, you cannot understand what love is in God. If you are bound hand and foot in utter selfishness, you cannot love a God that has magnanimity and disinterestedness. If you live for the flesh, you cannot exhale the sweet perfume of the spirit, as the fragrance of the flower rises above the form of the blossom. If you have no bright nature, how can you understand the ineffable, the spiritual, the infinite? By as much as God becomes possible and actual to you, by so much you have been transformed into that by which you now project, and by the imagination refine, and give infinite proportions to,—what you call your God.

It is *living* then, not *thinking*, that makes your God to you. There is a revelation going on to every man. There was a revelation to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; there was a revelation to all the judges; there was a revelation to all the prophets; there was a revelation in the apostolic era; and these revelations were authoritative. Inspiration is universal, and continues through all time. It is not authoritative now, as of old it was in special instances; but the fact itself goes on forever and forever. And only those in whom God's spirit wakes up a life and nature kindred to that which is in God himself, have the power to understand God, or to conceive of him.

The heart is a pallet; and he that portrays God, portrays himself. It is what you are, very largely, that enters into your conception of God. And oh! how many men have devils for Gods! How many men have Mammon, or Belial, or Baal, for a God! How many men have their worst passions, or their moral nature girded and shrined in their animal passions for a God! How many have projected and filled the heavens with the fearfulness of their bad nature! And they pray and yearn for that which is abhorrent to the real God. "Blessed are the pure in heart"—the sweet-thinkers; the sweet-lovers; the pure natures. Men that live in the serenity of their moral sentiments—they are the men who interpret God truly, first, to themselves, and then, in turn, as far as it can be done, to others.

2. If this be so, it becomes us individually to look well to that which

we are fashioning to ourselves. It is a wholesome question for every man to put to himself, not, What is Jesus Christ? but, What is *my* Christ? We are conscious that we have different Christs—that is, that Christ appears differently to different ones. We are familiar with earning after each other's experiences. "Oh!" says one, "that I could have such a joyous view as such a Christian has! Oh! that I had such a comfort of my hope as I perceive in another!" which, being interpreted, amounts to this: that different people have very different Christs. As you bring your own life to the fashioning of your Christ, in some respects he is meagre. He is yet "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" to some of you. He is to many of you only a conscience, sworded and armed. To still more of you he is but a problem, an argument, an abstract statement. To many of you God is a power—and a physical power at that—engineering in the heavens; while to many others he is a power domineering on the earth. So different men frame their Gods—their Christ-Gods—differently. But oh! there is no framing, and no following up, that is so unworthy of a man as that which is lean and meagre and poor—as that in which pity is less even than in man, or as that in which the commercial element is stronger than in man. Where I see God conditioned, and his mercies limited, and put upon one and another ground, it being said, "If you do so and so, God will do so and so: our God is thus and so;" when I see men piece and patch their notion of God, and circumscribe the effluence and infinite spontaneity of divine love, and the overflowing divinity of Jesus—when I see these things, it seems to me that men hold up here a rush light, there a wax torch, there a candle, and yonder a smoking pine knot, and call them Gods, each worshipping his own light, while the sun itself, out of doors, blazes all through the hemisphere, and should rebuke the meanness and poverty of the conception which men have of light.

Our conception of Christ is such that we are perpetually in trepidation before him. We are afraid to go to him. We are afraid to confess our sins to him. We are afraid to trust his grace again. We think the stores of his patience are exhausted. We have not known, we have not considered, the infinity that there is in love. If love in us is so strong, if love in us is so full of self denial and patience and gentleness, if love in us carries summer through our winter, and the tropics through our whole life, is our name higher in that regard than the name of Christ? Have you pity? Find me pity that stands out among men remarkable, and I will place by the side of it the pity of Christ, and say, "Here is a name which is above every name in that." Show me mercy—that mercy which suffers rather than make suffering—and over against the most saintly and notable instance that you can find, I will lift up a name that is above every other name in that. Show me a love

that longs to die rather than that another should die—yea, that is willing to live through tribulation and sorrow to do good to those that are beloved—and over against this rare and wondrous love, I will lift up a name of love that is above every name—the name of Jesus, that rebukes our want of faith, and our want of an elevated conception, in fashioning him to ourselves.

3. Since our conceptions of God are made up of the best conceptions and experiences of human life, refined and idealized, and fashioned by the imagination, they will always be under, and never above, the reality; so that the mistakes which might be fatal in other measurings are invalid and harmless in measuring our God. I like generosity; but not in an apothecary. When I buy my provision, the grocer may over-measure as much as he pleases; but when I send for medicine, I do not thank the apothecary to over-measure. If a man is counting out money to me, and he knows what he is about, it does not trouble me if for hundreds he counts thousands, or if for thousands he counts millions; but if he is calculating an eclipse, or performing any mathematical problem, I do not thank him for his generosity. I want him to be exact in his figures.

Now, when we are calculating God's goodness, we must take measure by the family, according to Christ's own declaration. On one occasion he taught the disciples on this very matter. He said to them, after giving them some other instruction, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" What is the exact logical position here? When you argue from a man to God, you are accustomed to say, "Ah! that is not a fair argument—God is a different being." "No," says Christ, "take whatever is good in man, and argue that God is not only that, but infinitely better than that. In fashioning your conception of God, make it as resplendent in justice, as august in truth, as noble and pure in love, as radiant and wondrous in pity, and as enduring as you please. Never be afraid that you will overdraw the divine character. God is never better in your thought or imagination than he is in himself. You may pile on, and pile on, as much as you please, and your descriptions of God will not transcend, but will come short of, the reality. When your heart is warmest, when it is noblest, when it is truest, when it is best, when it flashes out its ideal conceptions of God, that ideal is far more likely to be near the truth than one that is coldly, critically, philosophically deduced from definite premises. For God's nature really outruns the human capacity for reasoning.

4. Our whole life is to be a process of glorifying the name of Christ, not merely by chanting praise to him, but by the augmentation of our conception of him. For, as man himself is growing clearer-headed,

purer-hearted, truer, greater, nobler, he has all the elements that frame to him a sweeter and more blessed God. If the God that you beheld in imagination when you were converted, before whom you fell down rejoicing, and to whom you surrendered yourself, is the best that you have, woe be to you! You have not grown since you came out of the nursery, and you stand in the orchard of truth without growth. A true man has a better and better God every year.

Let me not be misunderstood, as though I taught that there were different Gods. There is but one God, unchangeable, infinite in power and wisdom and goodness. But, after all, *our conceptions* of God are perpetually changing, and changing according to our own moral growth. As we grow ourselves, with an increasing capacity to think new thoughts, and feel new emotions, our conception of God changes, as it ought to change, from year to year, in the direction of nobleness and attractiveness and beauty. That God who shone to you like a star on the horizon in your morning, should have ascended the heights of experience at your mid-day, and should shine down with the fullness of the sun upon your heads.

I sometimes think it is with our experience as it is with streams in mountain valleys. A thousand little silver rills start, they know not where, and bring up at the bottom of the mountain and form one flower-banked stream. This stream is fed by a thousand rills. It grows by other additions. And as it flows on it grows deeper and broader until it reaches the ocean. And that which is born of drops of experience in the mountain, runs down and on, as it were, growing broader and wider by the accumulation of experience-streams, and empties at last into the infinite. We find our thought of God growing and growing until it is developed into the eternal. And so our God ought perpetually to augment, and fill our heaven more and more to the end of life.

If these views and expositions be true, we see the meaning of Christ's thankfulness, when, on one occasion, he says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." It is true—and we see in the light of these remarks what is the reason of its truth—that there are many philosophers and many theologians who have a conception of God which is unspeakably inferior to that which is formed by very ignorant and poor and miserable people. If you walk with the pastors of the various churches through their parishes, you shall find in almost every parish some poor, and it may be illiterate, great-hearted creature, lying out of society, and back of it, perhaps, with only one single thread that connects him with his fellowmen—namely, the church—the religion of Christ; and yet you shall

find him in conversation mounting up and outrunning many who are more highly favored. I have talked with old colored men who, storm-driven, had gone to God, because they had nothing else to go to, and who had a richness and wonderfulness of experience that I had no parallel to in myself, though I was a preacher, and my business was to study. A God that you have *studied* out can never be such a God as you have *felt* out. A conception of God that your heart has formed will always exalt the name of Christ higher than any other name. And so it comes to pass, often, that those who are poor and humble in this world, those who are living literally by faith, those to whom the Lord's prayer is a daily verity, are better than we. "The last shall be first," oftentimes, and "the first shall be last." Our knowledge of God does not depend upon our education, nor upon our philosophical capacities, but upon our inward and spiritual lives.

This blessed name, which is so high in heaven and so great upon earth already, and which is destined to such exaltation and eminence, is our name. For there is no form of language which has not been employed by our Master to identify himself with us. We are linked with his history. His thoughts belong to us. His example was set for us. All his deeds were for us. And, more than that, we are joined to him as heirs. Whatever Christ has, he has parted, as it were, and divided with us. We are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," according to the declaration of the apostle. All that there is of beauty, and richness, and sweetness, and grandeur, and authority, in Christ, is not simply something to which we are permitted to look, but it is ours. We have the same right in it that a child has in the dignity and elevation of his father. If the father comes to honor, and is of universal repute, the child feels stronger and richer and happier. The father's name is the child's glory, as the child's prosperity is the father's joy. All that God has, is mine. All that he is, is mine. I am what I am by the grace of God. I do not stand in my own being. The sum of my richness is not what I have, but what I am to inherit. In the ineffable love of Christ, in the glory and beauty and grandeur of his nature, and in his elevation of character, I have a part and a lot. He is my Father, he is my Brother, he is my Friend, he is my Companion, and shall be forever and forever. He shall lead me by the hand here, and he shall lead me by the hand through the valley and shadow of death. And I shall fear no evil. I shall meet the mysterious foes that people darkness and space, and say, "The Captain of my salvation is victorious over all adversaries." I shall not fear to face the life to come. I know in whom I have trusted; and what I have committed to his charge he will keep—for he is a faithful Saviour. I know that my sins rise up, and he knows them better than I do. I know my inferiority

but did ever bird sit on the nest that it might brood the egg into life, and then wait patiently for the callow bird to fly and sing, feeding it the while, that it had not borrowed something to teach me what God is, who sits with infinite patience, brooding men till they are brought up out of imperfection into perfection, and are able to fly through the realms of power and grace and glory? I am imperfect enough, but not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me, gives hope.

And that same Christ is yours. He belongs to the beggar in the street, if he will take him. He belongs to the proud man, the vain man, the selfish man. He belongs to the needy man. He is medicine for every man's sickness and want. He is the Saviour that stands to help every living creature. The earth is his. "The field is the world." All men are his possession. And yet how poor men are! What beggars they are! How friendless they are! How lean they are!

Dear brethren, this is not all. In a very little time we shall depart, and the places that know us now shall know us no more forever. But there is to be another scene beyond this. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him (Jesus), and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The day will come when we shall stand disembodied—that is, free. We shall stand by sight and by sense in the great spirit-realm. We shall behold trooping from afar ranks, orders, degrees of grandeur and excellence. We shall see worlds bearing hither and thither, in all this vast and ever-congregating multitude, their contributions to the riches of the realm of God's whole creation. And we shall see, rising above them all, in sweet simplicity, and in the rapture of love, Jesus, the crowned Lover, whose heart bled, and bleeds, for us—the wine of our victory, and the food of our life. Above every name on earth and every name in heaven our Lover stands, and we are safe.

Take hold of that blessed name. Ye that have not known it, learn to know it. Gather up all fragmentary excellences, and fashion to yourself some conception of that Saviour. Begin to yearn toward him, to love him, and to follow him. Hear him say, "If you love me, keep my commandments. If you cannot keep them perfectly, try to keep them, and I will take the endeavor for the deed, and will undertake to keep you." Listen to his call, and heed it. And do not merely let his name be upon you outwardly, but let his Spirit be upon you inwardly. And then, when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads," you shall be of their number, and shall forever and forever be present with the Lord

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

We thank thee, our Father, that thou art more to us than any earthly parent can be to his children. We thank thee that there is a household into which thou dost gather thine own, where we are but as little children ourselves; where, with struggles, and with cries of fear and pain, we are often gathered in; but where thou dost comfort us even as a father comforteth his children. We thank thee that thus there is a refuge from the world; from its storms, its assaults, its temptations, its doom. We thank thee that thou hast reared up walls of partition round about thine own, and that they who put their trust in thee shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt take into thy fatherly care these little children, that are not of an age to know what they are, or what they do, nor to discern their right hand from their left. And what better are they who tend them? How feeble is our best wisdom! We cannot look forth to know what is going to meet us, nor could we prepare for it if we knew it. We are ourselves children who take care of children.

We commend these dear parents, therefore, unto thee, praying that thou wilt give them the illumination of the Holy Ghost, that they may know how to lead these children, they themselves being taught of God. May the lives and health of these little ones be precious in thy sight. Though the infirmities of the world are around them, and though they shall know sorrow and crying, grant that yet their names may be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and that they may have, even in this world, the pledge and surety of that inheritance where no more shall any one cry—where God shall wipe the tears from all eyes.

Look, we beseech of thee, not alone upon these children, pleased or weeping, but beyond, into every household. O Lord! how many are there whose hearts ache! How many parents are there whose eyes weep! How many are there who are full of sorrows, and who must come to thee, if they take thee, as they need thee, as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief! Have compassion on them, and teach them how to ease themselves of their burdens by casting them upon the Lord. If they have but little faith, do thou comfort them, and strengthen their faith. If there are any that sit to-day doubtful, and in twilight, watching by the side of their sick children, will the Lord be pleased to rebuke the disease, and restore their darlings to them; but prepare them for any event of thy providence which is best.

Wilt thou accept the thanksgiving of any that are in thy presence this morning who have come from sickness, and who have hearts full of gratitude for thy sparing mercies. Accept their testimony and their offerings to-day. Look upon any that are near and dear to us who are feeble and sick, and whose homes are darkened to them. Look upon parents who fain would guide their children, but who have the summons already in them to depart and leave them to others, whose hearts are sad and sore. Grant, O Lord! that there may be such consolations ministered unto them that they shall be able to say, "The Lord's will be done."

We pray that in all the great business of life, in rearing our children, in imbuing them with right dispositions, in fixing principles which shall guide them when we are gone, we may ever have the inspiration of God resting upon us. May we know what is right. May we be able to instil the knowledge of it into others. May we bring up our households so that they shall stand firmly in the service of God. May all the young in our midst be brave for things right, and be afraid only of evil. May they love the truth. May they learn honor. May they be upright before God and before men. Whatsoever things are pure, and whatsoever are true, and whatsoever are lovely, and whatsoever are of good report, may they know and practice. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that the generation which is coming up may be broader, and wiser, and stronger, and more abundantly fruitful in all good, than we have been.

We pray that thy Church everywhere may be more and more purified, and prepared for the great work which is opening for it upon earth. Let that kingdom in which

* Immediately following the baptism of children.

dwelleth righteousness come. Thou hast promised that all the earth shall be given to Jesus, our Master. Oh! let that day speed when he shall come and take his kingdom here, and reign on earth as he rules in heaven.

Lord Jesus, our desires are unto thee; and we pray that thou wilt grant that our faith may not fail, and that we may not shrink from our own part of that labor and achievement, and that we may be cheerful, and carry our burden and cross, and that we may live so that when we depart out of the world, the world shall feel its loss, and know the good that we have wrought, and heaven greet us. And bring thou us at last into thine own presence, and crown us with thy words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, ever more. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant unto us a knowledge of thyself through our own selves. Take away that defilement which is as the cloud before the sun. Take away those passions which interpret the devils to us, and not thee. Give to us life more in those parts which are of God, and which seek God. Grant that we may have such sympathy with men, such forgiving dispositions, such sweet and attractive lives, such longings and yearnings for purity, and truth, and honor, and glory, that we shall be lifted up into kindred sympathy with thee. Make thyself known to us thus. Oh! if thou wilt interpret thyself to us, purify us. Is not this the meaning of thy chastisements. Art not thou dealing heavily with many? and is it not that they may become sons of God? Hast thou not said that whom thou lovest thou chastenest, and scourgest every son whom thou receivest? Art thou not seeking to break off the husk? Art thou not endeavoring to open the shutter that the light of the sun may shine clear through the window, into their souls? O Lord! interpret thyself in every way—by joy and by sorrow. Fashion thine image before our minds, and keep it there; and by the sweet attractions of thy love, grant that we may walk from strength to strength, and from glory to glory, until we appear in Zion and before God.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

NATIONAL UNITY.

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."—ISAIAH XI. 12, 13.

The feuds and separations of the tribes of Israel caused their ultimate destruction. Ephraim, lying midway, and covering the territory subsequently known as Samaria, and Judah, lying on the southern part, two of the strongest tribes, had rivalries of ambition; and each sought to increase its own strength by dividing the strength of its antagonist. In like manner Greece was internally weakened by the strife of its little states. It was one of the signs and promises of the latter-day glory, that a time should come when contiguous tribes would vex and harrass each other no more, and would study union and not division.

The world and the race stand, to our modern thought, as Israel stood to the thought of the devout Jew. This passage has, therefore, a striking application to our land. The gathering together here of the outcasts of nations will not have escaped your attention. Neither will the dangers of alienation and of quarrel; nor again, the promises of unity. All of them have, or may be made to have, direct application to our own nation, and to our own times. I do not propose to consider in symmetrical fullness the dangers of disintegration, nor to suggest all, nor even all of the important, remedial influences. The shortness of the time justifies me in sketching in a few studies rather than in elaborating the whole picture.

Let me begin by mentioning the disturbing influences which are coming upon us through the great movement hither of emigrants from all the world.

As the Nile, in its great annual rise, brings down something of the soil of every formation through a thousand miles, and deposits it as slime for the sun to turn to soil and fruitfulness; as the Mississippi, with its greater tributary, the Missouri, carry to the fat regions around its Delta a tribute gathered from almost every point of latitude and lon-

THANKSGIVING DAY SERMON—THURSDAY MORNING, NOV. 18, 1869.—LESSON: PSA. CVII. HYMN (Plymouth Collection) No. 130.

gitude on the continent, so upon these United States, with annual deposit, come the emigrating freshets of the world. It falls upon us like mud. It shall be our richest soil. When it is aërated, and when intelligence and religion and liberty shall have penetrated it, it will be most precious. Its trouble is all now, and at the first. Its bounty and reward shall go on with increasing abundance to the very end. Can this nation survive, however, the chill and fever of malarial influence engendered by this new soil, until by culture the vast mass of new deposit shall, by the sun, the air and the plow, be sweetened, and become as wholesome for men as it is fertile for grain?

Men change their country, their national dress, their laws and governments; but their personal habits, their religious beliefs, their domestic traits, their manners and customs, their pleasures and amusements, they cannot easily change. They bring hither with them their unconscious conflicts. Things that at home are most innocent, they find here to be pugnacious. Nor do they know whence the conflict springs.

There is the everlasting conflict of religious ideas, and the organizations to which they give rise. We import vast material of spiritual warfare. The Catholic sect is a valiant fighter; and it grows apace among us, as it has a right to do. It has its own genius which it should attempt to spread abroad. It brings hither the ark of the middle ages, and thunders at the world which will not walk backward into it. Swarming about it are all forms of infidelity—for infidels are the legitimate children of superstition. And by superstition I mean all religious impulse from which the element of free individual reason is left out. Besides these come the minor sects. All sects swarm and multiply in the atmosphere and summer of liberty.

The mingling together of these strange materials, will give rise to quite enough of jarring and of activity; but we perceive still another element of discord in the conflict of social customs. Our Puritan fathers made channels, and Europe is furnishing the water that flows in them. We see that the land-marks are going. We see that under foreign influences our channels are becoming too narrow, and too straight. We perceive laws overwhelmed, sacred ideas rudely overborne, and the venerable Lord's day given up to festive songs, to dances and to bibulous hilarity. Many are alarmed, and think that the end of the world hath come. Nay, not by some space yet.

We should reflect, in regard to this, how differently the native-born citizen and the European emigrant have been related to this question of amusements. In America, so free have we been, so large an outlet has been given to our religious liberty, so large has been the expression of every political want, so free has industry been and so remunerative, that our people have not felt the need of amusements. These have seemed

like moths to our industry. We have found rest and exhilaration in other things. And to-day we urge amusements upon our people chiefly on moral and æsthetic, and not at all upon political grounds.

But in Europe political liberty is mostly unknown, and religious liberty is a pinched dwarf. A crowded population have but slender hopes of wealth from industry. Human nature would explode if there were not some vent given to it. Not free on the side of religion, not free on the side of politics, and not free on the side of industry, somewhere the window must be opened to let the air in. This, alike, the hierarch and the monarch saw. Governments therefore fostered popular amusements. In these, almost only, the common people of Europe found themselves at liberty to do what they pleased. Amusements are the safety-valves of Europe.

Now, a people who have had the chief happiness of their lives clustering about amusements, come to a land where exceeding freedom has left almost no place for such things. We have liberty in association with politics, with religion, and with business; they with amusements only. With the German on the one side, and with the Yankee on the other, is the same instrument of liberty, and for the most part it plays the same tunes; but that instrument in the hand of the Yankee is set four notes higher than it is in Europe. It plays business, and commerce, and government, and religion, here. It plays amusements there. And liberty discords with liberty, because the instruments are not set to the same key. And when emigration brings all the pipers together, it is not surprising that the music clashes. It is next in mellifluous strains to the bagpipe;—and that is the instrument that was made to express what was left of sound after other instruments had used up all smoothness and harmony!

For the rest, emigration brings strength. On the whole, it is intelligent—not exactly in our way, but, nevertheless, intelligent. The Dane, the Swede, the German certainly, add to the cerebral power of the nation. The Irish add to its activity. They bring large actual wealth. They bring indomitable industry, which is the father of wealth. This is true of the mass. But to the educated men and women who come, we owe a greater debt. They bring to us a culture, a means of culture, in art, in science, in classic instruction, which lays us under solid obligations to them.

There are, however, other dangers of disintegration on this great nation, besides those which come from the conflict of old peoples moving among new ones. It is the general tendency of human nature to degenerate in the midst of great and long-continued physical prosperity. Our institutions are the best if they are the best served; but the poorest if poorly served. Republican institutions demand energetic

and virtuous citizens. Compared with oars, what vast advantage has the steam engine! But if for want of steam you attempt to work the engine by men's hands, it becomes far inferior to oars. Steam engines require steam. Superior institutions require superior motive-power, or they are worse than the governments of primitive force. And no where else is government subject to so much attrition, and so easily made feeble, as where it is republican.

The immense extent of our country, too, gives bold opportunity to the development, in its remote sections, of antagonisms which shall in times of heat and violence break up the nation into combative fragments. The recent failure of such an attempt ought not to breed undue security. Few know how near it came to success. It was an attempt, however, founded upon bad grounds, odious to the moral sense of the world. It had bad counsellors, and it followed a course of events which tended to arouse and unite the nation in behalf of union to a greater extent than before seemed possible.

But should the Pacific states, in another generation, for strong commercial reasons developed without slavery as an underlying cause, undertake a separation, the issue would probably be very different. Our late success, then, must not argue its like on every subsequent occasion; and the failure of the late attempt must not lead us to suppose that no more attempts will be made. If now, with slavery gone, these very Southern States, that lie exhausted temporarily, waiting a few generations, should, on grounds of mere political economy and of good government, again demand separation, the issue is not to be prophesied from the experience of the recent struggle. It is not wise, it is presumptuous to rest down in the belief that the question of union is settled forever. For, in the growths of the future, great regions of this nation will be so large and so vastly populous, that while they may be prevented from rupture by reason of transient passion or sudden anger, they can never be prevented from separation if their real interest lies in separation.

We cannot too deeply ponder this truth, that national unity cannot be secured except by making it the *interest* of each section to remain in unity. For, so vast are the outlying members of this nation, that there is no power, even in all that remains, to hinder any one of them, by-and-by, if it becomes its interest to leave the national organization.

Rhode Island may not be able to withdraw alone, nor New Jersey nor Connecticut, nor South Carolina even, nor any single state, but the whole South, the whole Southwest, or the vast Pacific slope, move on different planes from single states. And that which might be prevented in a nook or corner, cannot be prevented on a quarter of a continent.

It was from peculiar reasons not likely to occur again, that military power was successful lately Hereafter only moral power remains to

us. That, or nothing! For myself, while I long with intense patriotism for the continued unity of this nation, I by no means regard the future friendly separation of its parts with such repugnance and detestation as I did the late attempt. If four great republics, homogeneous, civilized, and not in antagonism, but friendly, should be created out of the one, I should fear no such evils as if vast fragments were to break off and organise governments of reaction, rear up a monarchy—or a servile aristocracy—and infix a principle of mutual antagonism into the organic structures of the separated parts. Yet, absolute political union of the whole continent is better, so far as we now can see. Separation will not be fatal. At the same time, unity is so much better, that it is the duty of every Christian patriot to lay wise plans, long forecasting, to maintain the present happy union, and to maintain it remembering that there is no band or strap of iron strong enough, that there is no political force so great, no sword so sharp, and no artillery so multitudinous, as to have power to hold together long the unwilling parts of so vast a republic as this; that if we are to maintain national unity, it is to be by common consent founded upon common interest. The arrogance of any part, whether it be the arrogance of intellect, or the arrogance of wealth, or the arrogance of skill, or the arrogance of political power, would tend to disaffect and drive off other parts of this great nation. There must be not simply conciliation, but organic working toward common moral, intellectual, physical and political interests. In that, and in that alone, we shall have stability in unity.

When it is once understood that our only hope of continued unity is to be found in the exertion of influence rather than of force, it will give a new impetus, it is to be hoped, to all the moral energies of Christian men.

Let us look at some few of the hopeful and potential elements by which we may prevent attrition, disintegration, and final separation.

First, we will consider the spread of intelligence. Knowledge is that which a man knows. Intelligence is that which knows it. Knowledge bears the same relation to intelligence which invested wealth does to that spirit of enterprise which creates wealth. One is the active cause. The other is the product or effect of that cause. Mere knowledge will not save men. Intelligence is a preservative force.

American institutions have been criticised as not producing knowledge of the highest kind, nor full symmetric culture; but all things in their order. The problems of an old society and of a new one are not the same. Intelligence is of more value to us than high culture, though high culture may be more valuable to an old monarchy than general intelligence, and of more value to us, by and by, than just now. It is giving eyes to the whole people to give them intelligence.

It gives them training enough, at any rate, to guide them safely in their paths. It gives them a certain instrument by which to resist the outburst of passion, and the warpings and bias of undue selfishness and interest. The eye of the engineer, the eye of the trained scientist, may be better than the eye of mere intelligence; but for the whole people, till such time comes, in the millenial day, that all may be engineers in eye, and scientists in eye, general intelligence in all is better than high training and fine culture in a few.

This intelligence is to be produced largely by the freedom of religious discussion in the land. For, of all things that are dangerous, nothing is more so than that unity which means stupidity—the mere not resisting or not discussing—the condition of inactivity, or torpid swallowing and deglutition. That which men most feel in religious discussion is that which is vital to it, and that which makes it an element of salvation to a nation. It is that it is fire, and that men cannot have fire put on them and sit still. It is that it comes from life in earnest, and wakes life in earnest again. And life is the one great necessary quality in national existence.

It is right here that patriotism and Catholicism are radically and irreconcilably in antagonism. There might be some agreement in respect to symbols and worship—though I cannot hope for much approximation. There might be some coming together on doctrines; but there can be no such thing as agreement on the question of the submission of men's religious understanding to an order of men appointed to think for them. Our people will never think by proxy—and that is the vital point of the Catholic Church. Authority it is called: but authority on the one side is non-independence on the other.

If Père Hyacinthe had denied transubstantiation, a way of forgiveness might have been found. If he had denied the infallibility of the Pope, he still might have been pardoned. If he had even denied orders in the priesthood, there might have been some escape. But for him to deny that superiors had a right to think for their inferiors; for him to stand in front of Europe, and dare to say, "I think my own thoughts, though my order and my superior think another way"—that is a treason that never can be cleansed, either by baptism or by blood.

The highly organized animals—the birds and beasts of the upper rank—select their own food, and reject what they dislike. They range the air or the earth, find, take, or leave, as it pleases their tongue. It is the round clam that lies still, and lets the water bring him what it will. It is the round clam—that pattern of devotion!—which opens, eats, shuts, and is a clam still. And the clam ranks not a degree higher on the scale because the whole ocean is so big, that brings in his food to him. He is but a clam.

So, though the church of two thousand years may roll in its waves upon the individual, if the individual only opens, takes, shuts, eats, digests, and opens, takes, shuts, eats, digests, it is but a clam spiritual. And Protestants are not clams. They are winged and legged. They wander wide, and fly far, and select diversely.

Many men may be fascinated by the poetry in the hierarchy, many may be juggled by its casuistry; many may be philosophically scared by its doctrine; but when it comes to that which is the spinal marrow of the question—the submission of individual liberty of thought to the authority of an organized class of thinkers—that will never go down in America—or rather it *will* go down!

But the conflicts which go on between sect and sect—between the greatest of all sects and the numerous minor sects—whatever they may have of mischief in their bitterness, have much also of education. And it is far better that religion, with all the mischiefs of division, be subdivided thus, if it keeps men alive and awake and at work, than that there should be one supreme unity without vitality.

I might mention, also, the distribution of intelligence, the progression of thought through books and newspapers; but time will not permit me to dwell upon that head, as I have other things in store.

I mention next, the ministration of the free common school, as vital to our hope as a great united republic covering a whole continent.

The free common school gives to every child the one indispensable element, intelligence. Not only does it teach him by the master, but the scholars are all masters to each other. There is an atmosphere of intelligence in the school, and a public sentiment of intelligence among the young and rising generation around the school house. Intelligence becomes, where common schools abound, one of the signs and tests of manhood. The question is no longer, "Who can throw the heaviest weight furthest?" or "Who can run and leap the most like a deer, or hug most like a bear?" Another test of manhood is introduced; and it is no more muscle that makes the man, but nerve, and brain—the father of nerve. Intelligence becomes popular in the district and in the village, and manliness goes up a grade, where common schools abound.

Thus it equalizes, too. For human life is incessantly creating diversity. And if such diversity were to be carried on, some men, or classes of men, would grow mountain-high, and the less favored would lie valley-low. And so, a kind of aristocracy would follow classification. Classification adheres in nature, but it ought not to reign except throughout the generation where it asserts itself. Aristocracy is individual. It does not belong to classes in perpetuity. As

an attribute of individual excellence and power, it is divine, and carries with it aspiration, and ambition, and lordly success. But if human life permits itself, by institutions, to hold these elevations for the prosperity of other individuals than those that have earned them, you have instantly classified human society into an artificial aristocracy and a low-lying common people.

Now, Brain is master and owner in this world. Men may make resolutions, and form combinations, and devise plans; but as long as God keeps his original decrees unchanged, so long brain will be found to own and to govern. And they that have it will be masters. They that have it not will be servants—with protest and rebellion, but under the decree of God. And the true equity which comes with an ideal democracy, must be that equity which gives to every man an equal share of brain-*culture*. He that has it not is made, by that very deprivation, lower than his fellow who has it. Democracy does not mean a universal level. It does not mean compulsory equality. It means equitable opportunity. No government has a right to thrust a strong man down to the level of weakness. No institution has a right to force a weak man up to the level of the strong. Organized society will always be graded. True equity classifies men into superior and inferior. All that can be rightfully demanded, is, that men shall have education, for their full development; opportunity, for the use of their powers; protection, from the grasp and greed of unjust passions in their fellow men. After that, men must find their own level. The liberty of becoming all that God gave to a man the power of being, is all a true philosophy can demand.

The common school, by beginning early in the child's life, by giving a new ideal of life, by affording the primal stimulus, not only, but by opening the eyes so that a man can avail himself of all the other *stimuli* which by-and-by he will meet, is keeping up a true democratic equality, by giving all men their own proper chance of brain power.

It is democratic in another sense, because it is bringing back to a common level again the irregularities produced by active life. Knowledge, riches, skill, I have said, create classes, and so inequalities. If, in the spring, you look along a level cultivated field where corn grew the previous year, you will see ridges that remain. Now comes the plow to turn over the soil, and all the old hillocks go down, and lie level again for the next crop. The common school is the plow that levels each generation of human life. All the children, without regard to superiorities or excellencies of parentage, have to come together and stand on a common dead level in the school-house. The schoolmaster does not call the roll of the boys by their parents' altitudes, but by the alphabet; and if A is a poor man's son, and B is a rich man's son, B comes after

£, notwithstanding. And the rich man's dunce stands below the poor man's smart boy—and *must*. In this little germinant republic of the common school, the boys whose parents live in vastly different mansions, and with vastly different customs, are brought down to the fellowship and brotherhood and communion of a common humanity; they are obliged to mix together, and they frame laws with each other. There is a public sentiment of the school which is just as real and as vital, and as despotic even, as the public sentiment of the greater community; and it is a good thing to bring down to the original starting-point all the elevations and inequalities which the various forces of active life produce, and to say to all the boys, "Your feet must stand on one level: now shoot your heads as high as you please!" Liberty of growth and equality at the start, is the law of true democratic life; and this is what the common school gives.

Under no excuse, then, let it be suffered to go to waste. It is not simply the knowledge that it gives, but the capacity to get knowledge which it breeds: it is not merely the intelligence which it puts in the way of the youth, but the fellowship and common feeling which grows up among the boys of different families, that makes the common school valuable. And it is to the last degree desirable, not only that it should be common, but that it should be *free;* and not only that it should be free, but that it should be *superior*. No community can afford to let a primary private school be better than their free common school. No academy should be permitted to be better than the district common schools. You cannot anywhere else so ill afford to be parsimonious, and call it economy, as in the administration of your common schools. Secure more buildings, larger buildings, better furniture, more teachers, with ampler support (for the support of common school teachers, especially of women teachers, is a shame and disgrace to our civilization), with more capacity, bringing hither the noblest men and the noblest women. This is political wisdom. And nowhere is wisdom so squandered, and folly so regnant, as where men are unwilling to be taxed, and are parsimonious in those revenues which go to maintain free common schools for all the children of the whole community. The rich and the proud, the aristocratic and the arrogant, may be unwilling to send their children with the "common herd;" but their children need it. It is one of the best things of their whole education; and they should be compelled to do it, not by law, but by the fact that they cannot find a private school that is as good as the public school.

These schools should not only be free and common, but they should be *unsectarian*. If it be needful that the teaching of technical religion should be excluded from our common schools for the sake of maintaining their

universality, I vote to exclude it. If it be needful that the Bible should not be read in the common schools in order to maintain their universality, their freedom, and their commonness, I should vote not to read it. Because I disesteem it? I, the son of a Puritan, and a Puritan myself; I, that would have burned at Oxford, and fought with Cromwell—*I* disesteem the Bible? Most venerable is it of all the memorials that have come down through all time to our day. More joy is in it for the common people, more comfort has it for the afflicted, than any other book. It is the very home of a true democracy. It is the very temple of liberty in this world. I regard the Bible as being that which stands between aggressive power and organized selfishness, and the welfare of the great mass of the common people. It is the common people's book; and there is no class of people that need to read it so much as the children of the poor and the needy. Therefore I would be glad if every emigrant's child, and every home-born child, of every faith, not only had the Bible, but had the opportunity to read it every single day. And yet, I would not force it upon any. And if the reading of the Bible obliges us to forego our principles of toleration, I shall maintain our principles of toleration. It was because they would not suffer others to impose their faith upon them, that our fathers came hither; and shall we, now that the power is with us, take the ground that we may impose our faith upon those who do not believe as we do, because they are in the minority? Shall we, after a hundred years, with all the growing light and knowledge which has come down to us on this subject, commit the fatal blunder that sent the Pilgrims across the sea in winter, to lay the foundations of this noble republic? We believe in the freedom of religion, and do not believe in forcing one man's faith upon another man. And this being so, how can you organize the common school, which is supported by the public funds, in such a way as to force the Bible on the Jews, who do not believe in the New Testament, or upon skeptical men who do not believe in either the Old Testament or the New? It is manifestly inconsistent with the great principles of Christian toleration in which we believe, and which we love. To say that a Christian nation has a right to have Christianity taught in its schools, even if it be distasteful to a minority, is to put forth a formula for arrogant sects as soon as they are in the majority. Put the term Catholic in the place of the word Christian in the foregoing sentence, and how would the logic suit a Protestant?

"What!" says the Catholic, with real fear and conscientious earnestness, "do you propose to bring up the children of the community a nest of infidels?" No, I propose no such thing. You might as well say, "Do you propose to bring up these boys in school a lazy set?" because husbandry is not taught in the common schools. We do not

teach the mechanic arts in the common school. There are a hundred things that society needs which are not taught in the common school.

In proportion to civilization, work is divided and subdivided. There is one kind of instrument for one function, and another kind of instrument for another function. Early in the primitive times, when a dozen functions clustered around one instrument, the teacher used to teach religion, the Bible and the catechism, as well as the spelling book and the arithmetic; but in our day of general intelligence we divide the functions of society, letting the church teach dogma, letting the family teach personal religion, and letting the common school perform the task of teaching intelligence. And because we take out of the common school the special function of teaching religious dogma and religious history, do we therefore take away religion from education? Is there no other religion but that? We teach the child to read; we teach him to seek knowledge as a means of manhood; we give him the impulse to learn; and we say, "If we may not give religious instruction in the school, there is all the more reason why we should bring upon the Christian household the resposibility of greater fidelity." Build up Sunday schools in greater numbers. See to it that the church becomes a true teacher of the whole community. Let religion be taught, without which a man is not a man in his whole nature, and is not fully equipped for this life or the life which is to come; but let us not forswear our own principles of toleration and oppress the conscience of the Jew, the skeptical minded man, the Chinaman, the Budhist, or any person of any belief, or nation, or class. Let us not impose our religious books as a yoke upon others because we happen to have the majority and the power. That would be giving the charter of universal tyranny to power.

But are there no other ways of giving religious instruction? Do you suppose religion is all given to men when you have taught them the catechism? If a man can say the catechism—the Lesser catechism, or the Greater catechism, the Westminster catechism, the Episcopal catechism, or the Lutheran catechism—without stumbling, from beginning to end, is he a saint? Is religion all taught through such instrumentalities? By no means. If the teacher that stands in the school is an example of justice; if justice as represented by the teacher is sweetened by lenity; if the teacher is full of sympathy, and goes down to the dull and the stupid, and with infinite tenderness lifts them up, and supplies their want, is not that teacher better than any catechetical instruction? You cannot help having religion taught in the school if you have a *man* or a *woman* there. But it need not be dogma. It need not be instruction in the philosophy of religion. It is not theological doctrine alone which will teach religion. It is not anything

that belongs to the sects, as sects. It is that which is given to all. For I say that "whatsoever things are true," and "honest," and "just," and "pure," and "lovely," and "of good report," are esteemed by men outside of the sects as really as by men inside of them. The things which you and I believe to be essential elements of religion—the all-inspiring love-power, with its train of justice, and purity, and true sympathy—with those graces which it creates in the individual, those virtues of universal good report which dwell in every Christian bosom—these things all men believe in. Men believe in practical religion, though they may not believe in religious doctrines or institutions.

I therefore say, Let your common schools take care of that for which they were instituted—namely, universal instruction for the children of the community in the first elements of intelligence. Make the children readers. Give them such knowledge and training that they may become thereafter their own instructors. This is the function of the common school. And you cannot tax too heavily nor too often to secure the fulfillment of that function. The wisest expenditure a State can make is for the support of common schools. For every time you educate a child, you stop up a hole at the bottom of the ship of the commonwealth.

You will of course expect me to speak of religion, as one of the indispensable elements in producing unity and in maintaining the integrity of our national life.

The spirit of religion is reconciling and peace-bearing; but religion developed into a philosophy, or religion in the form of an institution, is pugnacious, and divisory; and always has been. The spirit of dogma is not useless. Nevertheless, it is pugnacious and divisive. The propagation of the church has always been a conflict. This is not to be reckoned a fault; but it shows that religion in this world passes through stages of development dependent upon the condition of the hearts upon which it is acting. While it works upon the lower portions of the disposition in the individual, and yet more strikingly in communities, we find it to be a disturbing force. But when by disturbance and strife, when by fermentation, human nature is at last brought to a higher condition, and communities are brought under the constant control of the higher reason, and of the moral feeling, then there is a true ripening and sweetening influence in religion. In other words, that which religion does at first, divides and shatters; but after a time, when, going through the necessary developments, religion comes to its last work, that will be "peace on earth, and good will to men."

It is true that the religion of to-day is doing an incalculable work of softening, smoothing and reconciling; but it is in the smaller organ-

izations of society, and not in governments and in whole comn unities, that its chief work is doing Religion is enriching the household. It is making the relationships of the family far more pure and far nobler than ever they were before upon so broad a surface of population. It is refining social life, not simply by the progress of elegance, but by a larger good will and a truer fellowship than ever before existed. It is developing in individuals, purity, self-denial, benevolence, and true moral heroism. It is at work in society, restraining the outrage of passions, inspiring indolence with activity and enterprise, building up schools, cleansing the ways of business, and producing an intelligent morality.

This work is constantly going on. It is engaged still in its primary tasks. It is a fire, a sword, a war-trumpet. The music belongs to the future. As apples grow in their sourness, all summer long, and find their sweetness as they ripen in autumn, so the fruit of religion in its instituted life yet puckers the mouth with its acrid bitterness of immaturity. By-and-by it will ripen to sweetness.

Instead of unity, it now creates division. A hundred sects there are, and each one thinks itself to be the spiritual navel of the universe. All of them alike cry, "Come to me." Every sect in Christendom, from the oldest—the Greek and the Roman—down to the last and latest, which is proudly Christian on the ground of disowning Christ, is in its organic spirit selfish and intolerant. The spirit of the sects, whether in the Catholic, the Greek or the Protestant Churches, is exclusive, dictatorial, divisive. The membership are often far more Christian than the organization to which it belongs. At present, and especially in the relations of the sects to each other, it may be said that the combative conscience is the nerve of the church. Institu tional religion has bred divisions, and it is its nature to do so. Sects are but the splinters and fragments which fly off by explosive violence of the moral sense of warrior Christians.

This is just as true of the Roman Church as of the Protestant, though the boastful and arrogant affirmation is widely prevalent to the contrary. The boasted unity of the Catholic Church is only the unity of a tenement house filled with quarreling families. The Protestant sects quarrel out of doors. The Catholic sects quarrel inside of the house. Twenty families pecking at each other in a tenement house—that is the Roman Church. Twenty families pecking at each other in separate houses of their own—that is the Protestant Church. There is no difference between them so far as division is concerned. Protestants bring forth sects and carry their young with them externally. The Catholic Church is *marsupial*. Like the opossum and the kangaroo, it brings forth its young; but it has a pouch into which they

run, and where they nestle and quarrel. There is as much quarreling in the pouch, as there is outside on the back.

I do not speak this to the prejudice of the Catholic Church. Though it will not be owned by them, I speak it to their credit. It is an honorable sign; because it is a sign of vitality. The age of unity has not come. We are living in the age of attrition, of division, of vitality by excitement. Many generations beyond us there will be a better time; but to-day vitality comes with agitation and division. So vastly predominant yet, in the individual and in the community, is the coarse and belluine element, that for a long time religion must be in conflict. A religion without conflict is dead.

Our past history is an illustration of the fact that religious institutions do not tend to national unity, or to any considerable power. The civil war was not checked by the spirit of the churches. The Presbyterian Church divided into the North and the South; the Methodist Church divided into the North and the South; and then the Episcopal Church divided into the North and the South. Indeed all national churches were split, and the halves stood in mutual oppugnation. The Baptist and Congregational Churches having no national form, by their very nature could not divide ecclesiastically; but the churches of the North and those of the South were morally separated as much as were the two halves of the national churches.

Neither do we perceive that the work of cohesion, unity and homogeneity, as it was not favored by religion in its sectarian forms, will be much helped by religious bodies, now that they are reunited; for, as hitherto, in this distressed world, it will so require men's religion to maintain the organic life and separateness of each sect, that they will have little to spend beyond that. The Catholic sect is busy with converting Protestants, and Protestants are busy with protesting against being converted. Calvin pursues Arminius, and Arminius pursues Calvin. John the Baptist is still at the Jordan immersing. The enginery of a hundred sects is brilliant, and all proclaim the lapse of others, and their own divinity. Meantime, religion, descending as a dove, rests silently upon a myriad souls, comforts sorrow, purifies love, overcomes fear, and visits men in prisons, at sick beds, in houses of poverty, amid trials and sufferings, saying, "Peace, my peace, I give unto you."

In the unity of the nation, and in the reduction of its materials, we hope much from Religion; very little from sectarian churches: much from the Spirit of God blessing the truth of his Word to the hearts of individual men; much from individual men that are nobler than their sect; much from free men whose adhesion to forms and ceremonies is the least part of their existence; much from religion as it exists in its

higher forms in individual natures and in public sentiment; very little from dogmas; very little from theology, as such.

And yet, if it could be understood by them, here is a new call to the sects, not to disband, but to hold each other in true fellowship; to act in harmony, if not in unity. The prevalence of gross immorality; the continental proportions of infidelity; the waste of the stock notions that is going on through tendencies generated by material science; the vast work of civilization and Christianization which opens, impossible to quarreling sects, but not difficult to harmonious and co-ordinated denominations, each working and suffered to work in its own way, and suffering all others to work—these are providential calls to the great body of Christian men and women to truce; to new leagues of amity; to coöperation and to harmony.

We ask not that any should cast down their altar, but that they should permit us, on the other hand, to worship unharmed at ours. We ask not that any shall revamp their creed, but that it may not be considered a crime for us to maintain ours. We ask none to let the full sunlight pour through their windows, instead of shutting it out by colored and grotesque panes. If they prefer their windows let them have them; and let them permit us to have ours. Let us look for a true humanity, let us look for the true fruit of religion, not in the associated body of this or that denomination, but in the majesty and power of love in the individual hearts of those who are gathered into sects. Let us look no more into books, merely. Let men be the *living epistles* in which we shall read what the Spirit of the Lord hath to teach in any sect. Here, in the outpouring life, where religion means vital power, power of conscience, power of love, power of faith, power of beneficence, power of sympathy—here let there be coöperative harmony and true union. And if it please God, with a civilization which comes by commerce, which comes by intelligence, which comes by schools, which comes by the peculiar position of all parts of this land—if it please God, with this, at *length*, to give us a religion that shall teach men to love one another, then we shall be saved; our nation will be maintained by bonds made and riveted in heaven, which no instrument yet formed can cut or sunder.

Until men's reciprocal interests upon the higher plane of moral ideas shall be better understood, until religion shall be a uniting and not a divisive element, we must with more eagerness than ever, look to the harmonizing influence of men's reciprocal interests upon the lower plane of commercial and industrial life. So wide spread is this nation, that it has within itself almost all the elements of prosperity which other nations seek beyond their own borders. The far North and the extreme South work for different products, but in difference they find reciprocal

advantage. If legislation be hindered from impertinent interference and restriction of our home and foreign commerce, and industry be left free to find its own laws and channels, we shall have in commerce a force drawing together into undisseverable unity the vast districts of this continent, and binding them, we are ashamed to say, with a force which cannot yet be found in moral or social influences. For human nature is as yet riper and wiser at the bottom than at the top. Self interest has more power in promoting peace and unity, than justice, humanity and religion.

I shall advert to but a single political agency in the maintenance of National Unity, and that is the sacred and jealous maintenance of the *Rights of the States*, and the vital local governments of States, as distinguished from the federal and national government. New England, from her earliest colonial days, with a fervor and intensity that have never been surpassed, preserved inviolate the one political doctrine which will enable this vast nation, if anything will enable it, to maintain Federal Unity; and that doctrine is, *the Rights of the States*. When the wholesome doctrine of States Rights reappeared in the South, it had in those warm latitudes undergone fermentation, and had passed into a new thing, viz: STATE SOVEREIGNTY. There can never be more than one sovereignty in a political body. The NATION *alone* is Sovereign. It is to be sure, a limited Sovereignty. The metes and bounds have been fixed. All within them is Federal, all without belong to the individual States. Within their own spheres the self jurisdiction of the States is absolute. It cannot be meddled with or usurped by the general government. Things belonging to any single State alone, and not to all the States in common, must be under the supreme disposal of that State. This simple doctrine of State rights—not State Sovereignty—will carry good government with it, through all the continent. No central government could have sympathy and wise administrative adaptation to the local peculiarities of this huge nation, couched down between two oceans, whose Southern line never freezes, and whose Northern border never melts.

The States are so many points of vitality. The nation, like a Banyan tree, lets down a new root where each new State is established, and when centuries have spread their gigantic commercial tree over a vast space, it will be found that the branches most remote from the centre do not impart their vitality, carrying it through the long intricate passages, from the parent trunk, but each outlying growth has roots of its own, and draws straight from the ground by organisms of its own, all the food it wants, without dissociating its top from the parent branches!

The dignity and power of National Sovereignty will be secured by maintaining unimpaired the local rights of the States.

Let us all labor for the unity of the nation, for the education of its citizens, for the spread of virtue and true morality, for the promotion of an industry which shall redeem the poor from servile and sordid drudgery, for the freedom of its commerce, for a more just and generous sympathy between all its races and classes, for a more benignant spirit to its religion, and finally, let us implore the God of our Fathers, by his own wise providence, to save us from our wanton passions, from impertinent egotism, from pride, arrogance, cruelty, and sensual lusts, that as a nation we may show forth his praises in all the earth!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our heavenly Father, to make mention of thy manifold goodness, through which our lives have been spared, and by which we have been loaded with benefactions innumerable. Every hour of every day, every moment of every hour of every day, bears witness to thine unerring care. Thou hast commanded all thy laws, that they forget us not; that they serve us. All the seasons are but thy servants, ministering to us, thy children. And thou thyself, by thy Holy Spirit, art evermore near to us, brooding upon our hearts; lifting us into life; bringing us toward thine own self by the sweet affinities of love.

For all thy goodness, which thou hast manifested to us severally, and in families, and in a community together, we desire publicly, and with unfeigned thanks, to render thee, this day, our praise. We would be glad before thee, and rejoice in the Lord. We thank thee that thou hast removed war from our borders, and given us again peace; and that all the manifold sufferings which came by reason of war are being salved by thy kind providence. We thank thee that there is the return again of prosperity, and that there are indications of returning confidence and love among alienated brethren. We thank thee for all the auspicious tokens which look forward to better times to come. We thank thee that there are the seeds of intelligence sown, and that they are springing up in such pleasant plants of righteousness. We thank thee that thou art giving to our citizens so much of harmony. And though there be much that is discordant yet, and though conflicts yet lie in our way, and we must take the future by storm, the kingdom suffering violence, and the violent taking it by force, yet we rejoice that there is so much of encouragement to arm us, and to comfort us; and we go forward in our way of life believing that thou, O Lord God of our fathers! who didst inspire them with wisdom to make wise laws and true governments, wilt be with their children, and insure them with wisdom to maintain and execute wise laws; to keep intact true governments.

We pray that we may be delivered from all animal fury, and from all corrupting passions, and from all those ambitions and conflicts of interest by which we are in danger. We beseech of thee that all our strivings may be rivalries in friendship, and in thrift, by which life, and not death, shall spring up.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanks this morning for the great prosperity of the seasons; for the harvests' abundance; for a propitious heaven and a fruitful earth. Accept our thanks for the measure of health which hath prevailed throughout our land; for the prosecution of so many enterprises of industry; and for their successful issues.

We thank thee that thou hast been pleased to grant stability to our government, and to our several governments in states. We thank thee that this great nation, so little time ago storm-tossed like the sea, and casting up its bloody waves to the very heavens, is tranquil, and that there are so many signs of continuing peace in our midst.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanksgiving for all the blessed joys of the household: for the purity and virtue and joyfulness of our family life. We beseech

of thee that thou wilt accept our thanks for all the prosperity which has attended the schools and colleges and seminaries of learning in our land; that so many have resorted to them; and that so many are going out from them, as stars in the night, to bear light and guidance to those that are less favored.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanksgiving for all the mercies which thou hast vouchsafed to us through our church. Although we behold its weakness, and its manifold imperfections, its foundations having been laid, and it having been builded by human hands, yet we rejoice that thou art willing to abide in such instrumentalities, that thou mayest bless thy people. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt purify more and more thy ministering servants. And may all those that teach be taught of God. We rejoice that thou art not content with any of the channels which are appointed. More than the church can hold is thy favor to man. Greater than all else is that out pouring light of thy free Spirit which blesses men as the noonday sun in all the earth. And we pray thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt continue the God and Father, the Redeemer and Saviour, of mankind. Arm and equip all those great agencies that have power in them, that they may work for that which is spiritual in man, and not for that which is animal.

Bless the nations of the earth. Remember not alone our own land, but all lands. May the work of civilization go forward. May knowledge take the place of ignorance, and true faith the place of superstition, and all the earth see the salvation of our God.

Let thy blessing rest with us while we shall yet sing forth thy praises, and while we shall speak messages of instruction. Be with us in all the changes of this day. And as we are gathered together in our houses, with our dear children and friends around about us, let not our love and joy grow selfish. May we remember the less favored. May our sympathies go out to all the children of want, everywhere, around about us.

And so may we live in the midst both of sorrows and joys, chastised by the one and comforted by the other, until we are prepared in this school of life for our heavenly home. Then, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, take us to our everlasting life. And we will give the praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, we beseech of thee, our heavenly Father, thy blessing to rest upon the year that begins, now, from this the anniversary of our public thanksgiving. Grant that the light of truth and of knowledge may shine more brightly in the year that is to come, than it has in the year that is past. Grant that all the influences of thy Spirit, working out true religion in vital forms, may more and more prevail through the coming year. May we be faithful to our several instruments; but may we not vex each other. Let not Ephraim vex Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. May there be peace in our borders—peace not alone in outward interest; peace not alone where men's selfishness teaches wisdom; but peace to the conscience, peace in faith, and peace in loving. And so may thy name be glorified. We ask it through Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

SOCIAL OBSTACLES TO RELIGION.

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."—MATT. x. 36.

You will remember the connection in which this passage stands Our Saviour surprised his hearers by saying—and it would doubtless be still a surprise if he were to utter it in our midst—that his coming was not to bring "peace;" that is, not at first. He came to send "a sword." There were ten thousand connections that had to be sundered in the spiritual development of his kingdom. The sword in the beginning; victory and peace only in the far future. That which he declared has proved true in every age.

There is no other influence that has been such a disturbing force as Christianity; and it has been disturbing in proportion as it was pure and sweet and loving. There has been nothing else that has wrenched off so many roots as the attempt to raise up generations of men to a higher plane than that on which they had been living. There is nothing that still lacerates so many cords, or wounds so many nerves, as when in a community the moral influence on any subject is carried up one or two or more degrees higher than it has been. Communities are so interaffiliated, they so grow together, that neither one person, nor a given number of persons, nor a class, nor a whole community, can be lifted up without deranging the combinations that have been formed. And there is nothing that deranges a man's social connections so much as his entering upon a vital, active, energetic, spiritual, Christian life.

We are accustomed to think of religion as the most beautiful and desirable thing in the world; and many persons who are harmoniously related to their fellows in the matter of religion—who have been Christianly bred, and are in Christian families—can scarcely, looking out of the windows of their own experience, imagine how it can be that when a man follows Christ his "foes shall be they of his own household." There are many whose happy experience makes it impossible for them to understand this except speculatively. But he knows very

SUNDAY EVENING, Nov. 21. 1869. LESSON: MATT. X.—32—42. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 364, 635, "Shining Shore."

little of human life who does not know that there are a thousand who are differently situated, where there is one who enjoys peace and tranquility in his religious experience. Many of you are perfectly well aware that there is nothing which requires more courage, more zeal, and more help, than coming up from a lower to a higher plane of life, and that the difficulties spring not less from a man's surroundings, than from his own disposition. It is not simply the reluctance of his own will, it is not merely his own selfishness, nor is it alone the plea and protest of his lower nature against the higher, that stands in his way. Those who are nearest to him, who have the most interest in him, and who in a certain sense wish him well more than any others, are often the very ones who are most in his way, who hang heaviest on his purpose, and sometimes draw him back with fatal defection. At other times they draw him back so as to double and quadruple the exertion required for him to break away from evil and take hold upon good. And so it comes to pass that "a man's foes" *are* "they of his own household."

No one has the power to do by you what that man can who lives next to you. He that is across the way, or in a distant city, and only touches you through some outward channel of business, may have some power to influence you; but he has no such power as one whose heart grows into your heart—for people in life grow like honeysuckles, that twine and twist themselves together, so as to forbid any separation except by the knife.

I propose this evening to show, *first*, the reasons why men labor to prevent their fellows from rising to a vital Christian experience; *second*, the motives that are upon men who are seeking a higher life; and *third*, the mode of overcoming such hindrances and resistances.

1. We are to remember that social life is not merely the accidental juxtaposition of man with man. Social life, even in its smallest divisions, instinctively organizes itself. Where there are half a dozen friends who have been accustomed to meet so that they constitute a little circle by themselves, each one that moves as a factor of this little circle will find that they are so interlaced one with another, they are so woven together, that they have a common interest which no man among them can meddle with without affecting, if not himself, yet his companions.

A discontented thread in a bit of lace wishes to withdraw itself from the compact of the loom; but if it is drawn out, the whole lace is injured. If this thread is removed, it leaves behind it gaps that are fatal to the perfect condition of those that remain.

Here are half a dozen men who have no constitution, no by-laws, no expressed or implied agreement, but whose lives have come together

and grown into each other like the over-crossing roots in a common sod, one of which you cannot transplant without cutting half a dozen others. If you take one out of this company of men, though they may not know what is the matter, they feel that something is wrong. One man feels his pride hurt; another feels his vanity hurt; another feels his appetite hurt; another feels his interests hurt. They cannot express it, they cannot analyze it, they do not know anything about it; but here is the truth that even half a dozen men co-related and acting together in business or pleasure, twine together, and form a little society, and come, in a short time, to work into each other, just as wheels do in a machine.

The smallest wheel in my watch, emigrating, would leave all the rest of the wheels, big and little, in a very sorry plight. Although it may be very small, and stand on its own rights as a wheel, yet, after all, it has been cogged, and notched, and adjusted, so that the whole structure depends on that. You might as well smash the watch as to take that out. Frequently it is the case that the members of a circle are so affiliated, so exactly fitted to each other, that if you take one out, all the rest are dissevered. And it is not surprising, it does not imply any great degree of depravity, to say that where a number of men are living an ordinary, an average, social life, and one of them is inspired with a higher, a holier religious purpose, and desires and means to go up on a level that none of them have been standing on, his emigration upward wrenches them all. And it is not strange that they try to stop it.

This is putting it upon its most favorable ground; but frequently not so much as this can be said. Men are often enlightened in this matter. They form little groups and societies, as I have said, and they are distinctly conscious, either that their life together is not a religious one, or is a mixture of good and bad, or is decidedly bad. Little groups exist all through society that do not wish certain demoralizing elements taken out of the way, because these elements are the nerve that vibrates enjoyment in their midst, and to take them out of the way would be to destroy the pleasure of the whole group. And so, when one would break away from such a circle, by entering upon a higher religious life, there is oftentimes the reluctance and resistance which comes from the impoverishment of pleasure.

Men frequently stand related to each other in such a way that if one goes out of the circle, it is like the going of one out from a quartette of singers. The other three are leaner on account of the absence of that one. Especially where, as is often the case, the melody runs, sometimes into the tenor, sometimes into the base, and sometimes into the other parts—if one or two are gone, the others cannot sing.

It often happens in social life that men are affiliated in such a way that they are dependent upon each other for their pleasures—so dependent that they do not wish any one to escape from their circle, and that if one does escape, the harmony of the circle is broken up.

This is still more so when pleasure takes on unallowed forms. Where the public sentiment of the community is such that men are obliged to evade it, as they often do, by going through subterranean channels; where pleasures are defended, it may be, among the men themselves, but are in such a sense illicit that they do not care to have them come to light; there is under such circumstances a secret harmony, an understanding; each one is a sentinel both to warn of danger and detection from without, and to keep traitors from escaping from within. There is nothing freer, where all have confidence in each other, than men in an illicit course of pleasure, and nothing more joyous for the time being—at any rate in its rosy hours; and yet, there is nothing more jealous and nothing more angerable than men who are associated together in pleasures which may be sweet to the taste, but which the public sentiment, if not their own conscience, disallows. And if one of them attempts to escape, it is the worst kind of treason, because it is treason on the most sensitive spot—on the very point of their organization. And it is not strange that they clutch at the escaping one, and by the garments, if possible, draw him back again.

It is frequently the case, too, that the escape of one from a circle towards a true and high religious life is hindered on account of the social ambitions which prevail. It is not necessary that a man should wear a crown on his head to be a king. You never saw ten men together that there was not a king among them. It is not necessary that there should be a tiara or a sceptre to make a pope. There never were half a dozen men together that one of them was not a pope. It is not in politics alone that there are systems of ranks and honors. There never was a household in which there was not an organized system in which the principle of ambition, of superiority and inferiority, did not have its play. There never was a little circle gathered around about some bright centre, some radiant woman, for instance, as in the French *regimes*, that there were not aristocrats, monarchs of the circle; that there were not those who felt proud that they had the power to entertain their companions—one by his wit, it may be; another by his humor; another by his reason; another by his recitation of curious things. Each one comes to the circle with his contribution, and for the time being he is regnant, and the others look upon him and rejoice, and burn incense to him. And in turn they are flattered and praised And being flattered and praised, they come to hanker for flattery and praise. And it is very hard to see any of those who have been accus

tomed to burn incense before you go to other gods. Men hate idols, with one exception—when they themselves are the idols. Every man wants to be an idol, and to have other folks swing incense before him. And if anything takes place by which men are led to fear that they are going to lose their frankincense, they snuff at it.

And so it comes to pass that if a person in a bright and radiant circle of friends is about to separate himself from that circle, anxious inquiry is made, "Are you sick?" "No, not sick, but *serious*." The worst of all possible sicknesses is seriousness, it is thought, when it means rising up to a higher plane of life. And circles defend themselves against men that are going to desert under such circumstances.

Another element which comes into play in analyzing the reasons why persons endeavor to prevent the escape of men to a higher religious plane, is the judgment and rebuke which is always reflected, by such a course, upon their own career. Every man is the natural and appointed judge and censor of all those who are doing worse than he. A handsome man interprets and measures the homeliness of the homely people that come near him. A tall man makes men short that are not so tall as he is. He does not do it on purpose; he cannot help himself. I have known short men who would not go into a room where there was a tall man. They desired to have all the benefit of their height without any unfavorable comparison. A strong reasoner reflects the inferiority of a poor reasoner. A good man is the natural judge of a bad man. And so it is all the way through life.

Now, in a circle of men who are coördinated with a certain sort of moral quality, who wink at each other's sins, and promote each other's pleasure, at the same time helping each other's consciences by maintaining a kind of conventional agreement, let one be struck with the fire of a nobler aspiration, and let his conscience begin to stir itself like a sleeping eagle that knows sunrise is coming, and all the others will begin to find their consciences troubling them. And they do not like to be troubled by their consciences. They do not feel the inspiration which their companion does, but they feel the reaction of that inspiration in the form of rebuke; and they do not like it. If one of a circle of men who indulge in intoxicating drinks, who are addicted to intemperance—not gross, beastly drunkenness, but *refined* intemperance—if one of a circle of such men becomes clean-lipped, his clean lips become a standing rebuke to those whose lips are wet every day and every night. They have been accustomed to enjoy themselves, unrebuked, in animal and social indulgence, in illicit pleasure; and they have been a mutual insurance company, in order that no man should suffer rebuke in the presence of the others; and if one of their number breaks away

and stands up so that they all see that their lives are grossly wicked, he becomes to them like a warning angel, pointing them to the day of judgment. And in such cases men that have been kind, and genial, and charitable, often become censorious, and disagreeable, and malicious, for no reason except that one of their companions wishes to change his habits and be a Christian. He has had very little experience in life who has not seen this.

Real, not ordinary religion, is the thing that brings about these results. A man can change sects a great deal easier than he can rise in the sect where he is to a higher life. A man can go out of the Presbyterian church into the Methodist church, and not be a bit better than he was before. A man can go out of the Methodist church into the Congregational church and not be a bit better than he was before. Emigration does not change character. A Protestant may become a Roman Catholic, or a Roman Catholic may become a Protestant, without being any better or worse than he was before. Therefore, men of a circle will frequently let each other escape and change sect without any protest. But when a man proposes to himself reformation, and a higher life, the cases is quite different.

A man says to his companions, "Look here! I am going to quit Sunday frolics." "What!" say they, "you are not going to be sober?" "Well, no; I am going to church with my wife." "Oh! going to be pious." "I am going to get *some* religion. I think I understand myself. I shall be with you all the week long; but on Sunday I will go to church." "Oh! that is all right. You put on piety as a sort of insurance. It will make you a better fellow, no doubt. Religion is very respectable. It is not a bad thing for you to have."

A man arrives at that time of life when he is married, and begins to have children about him, and he wants to see his children occupy good places in society; and he thinks it proper for one in his circumstances to let the world see that he has religion somewhere. He wants a religion that will not trouble him too much, but that will take care of his sins, and insure his immortality. The idea which thousands of persons have of religion, is, that it is a kind of insurance company for middle-aged people who, for social reasons, should have a kind of commitment of this sort.

Therefore, you shall find that men may change and shift about in these ways without exciting any oppugnancy among their circle. It is when, by the power of the Holy Ghost, a man's soul begins to lift itself up toward its immortality; it is when all that is bad in a man, or all the good in him that is perverted to bad purposes, begins to get the buffet, and his reason, and higher affections, and moral sentiments begin to be freer, larger, and more controlling in his life—it is then that

religion separates him from all those who will not go on with him in his new career.

It is under such circumstances that men say, "If you will not drink with us you are not of us; if you will not work with us without scruple, you are not of us; if you will not walk hand in hand with us, you are not of us." And if a man is brought under the divine influence, and he says, "I am God's, and I must obey his laws," then the line of division is run.

Oftentimes this takes place under circumstances which are exceedingly trying, as where it separates husband and wife, or parents and children, or near friends, or lovers, or partners in business. When religion has this effect, it is like a fire that runs between men, and burns everything in its course.

2. Let us see what the motives are by which this social hindrance works.

In the first place, there is the battle of fear into which men go. Fear is thought to be a very ignoble quality. You are mistaken if you take that view of it. Fear has not merely a low, basilar function. Although it may have a low form, it rises and takes on higher forms. It gives an edge to every one of the feelings. Fear joins itself to reason, and then it is an intellectual force. It joins itself to conscience, and to taste, and to love. Fear pervades the mind, and every single feeling. So when men say that fear is ignoble, they do not understand the range of its operations. Many men are wrought upon by fear. It operates differently on different men, according to differences in their nature or faculties. Some men are utterly devoid of fear. You might as well attempt to dissolve a slate roof by allowing the rain to fall on it, as to attempt to affect some people through the motive of fear. Some are stimulated and braced up by fear. Others are weakened and pulled down by it. In some cases it acts like a malaria, and prepares the way for other things.

From the highest to the lowest feeling, men are plied with this motive of fear. Sometimes it is in one shape, and sometimes in another; but whatever shape it is in, men know how to use it against each other. It is the instinct by which men manage one another for harm. If we were half as wise in snaring men to good as we are in snaring them to evil; if there were the same wisdom, the same instinct, by which we should know when to take them and how to touch them for their benefit, that there is by which we know when to take them and how to touch them for their harm, how glorious it would be! For men are to men in things bad, as a musician is to his instrument, who knows all its peculiarities of temperament and habit, and is facile with it. Men know perfectly well how to deal with things that are worldly, carnal,

devilish. It is only when we rise to the nobler development of manhood that men are unskilled and awkward.

Next is the battle of interest. Men try to dissuade their fellow men from true religion on account of the effects which it will have upon their interests in life. These effects are oftentimes produced on their business interests. Men say, to their companions, "Look here, my good fellow; there is no harm in your being religious if you do not make a fool of yourself. Election is coming on; and if you want to join the church, and you think it will do you any good, in the name of reason, join it; but, as your own Bible says, *let your moderation be known to all men.* If you want to do the thing up like a gentleman, why, go into the church; but do not make a fuss about it. You are smart, you are brilliant, and if you are sensible and wise you have hardly anything to do but just to wait, and the people will gradually drop into your hands, and you will rise step by step; but if you are going back on your friends in this way, how are they going to elect you to anything? If you are going to be *good,* that is the end of any chance for you. You cannot use any such material, and therefore your interests do not require it. You mean to be a successful lawyer, you mean to rise to the position of a judge, you mean by-and-by to be a member of Congress, and perhaps you have some idea of one day being President; but if you are going to realize these expectations you must begin right. You must not let yourself down on your old friends. If you go into the church, and take on religion in good earnest, you may turn out a minister, but you will not succeed in anything else."

It is not I that is saying this. You know that I am faintly echoing human nature and human experience.

To another it is said, "Why do you break up our little circle by going out of it? You say you are going to be a Methodist." "Oh! no, not that," says the man; "but I am going to live *Christianly.*" "But you cannot live Christianly and advance your social position. I recollect what you started from. You came to the city, you know, a poor boy. You had everything to make; and you have got along remarkably well. You have good business talents. Three years ago you had no influence. Now you have been invited to the house of the principal of the firm. He has fine daughters; and you have as good a chance of getting one of them as anybody. You are a well made, snugly built, handsome fellow, and are pleasing in your manners; and if you only understand your hand, there is no trouble in your rising. Wait five years, and you can take your *pick.* Everybody who has daughters, and has money, wants the best kind of son in-law; and you are in the market; and you are not going to throw yourself away. If you do not go up there when invited, and join in card and champagne

parties without regard to your scruples, you will make a fool of yourself, and stand right in your own light."

If I should go to these men, and, in this bald, vulgar way, hold up secular interest as a motive to religion, how they would resent it! But they do not hesitate to hold up professional and social prospects as motives to wrong conduct!

But sometimes it comes home nearer than that. An old surly man has a boy that he has meant should succeed him, and be the heir of his property, and take his place, and manage for him, if he would only be greedy, and coarse minded, and learn how to take a creditor by the throat and squeeze him till the blood flows out of his pockets! But the old man hears that the boy has been attending "those cursed religious meetings;" and he says, "If that boy is going to get his head full of crotchets, and talk about "generosity," and that sort of nonsense, I will cut him off without a shilling." He calls the boy to him, and says, "What is the matter with you?" The boy does not know what does ail him. He only knows that he feels very bad. He is satisfied that he is all wrong with his circumstances. And he blushes, and is ashamed, and is ashamed because he is ashamed. And at last he says, "I am going to join the church." And he means more by that than you think, perhaps. There is a dim consciousness in him that he has not been living a fit life, that he has not been pursuing a manly course; and he is determined that somehow or other he will break away from the things that are holding him down, and get hold of something that will carry him higher. And his father is "sweet on him," as it is said when a man is bitter; and there is a pretty quarrel started very quick. The young man is threatened. "Now do you choose. If you mean to be as sensible as you have been heretofore; if you mean to be obedient (and he reminds him that the Bible says that children ought to obey their parents); if you mean to walk in the path that I have marked out for you, why, it will all go well with you; and I would as lief divide a little with you now. And when I am dead you shall have the whole of my property. But if you persist in going with that sort of people, and become a ranting Methodist, that will be the end of it. I will find some other heir. Your cousins are quite willing to take your place."

This strong and most vulgar appeal would be conclusive to some natures. It would set them up. "As for me," they would say, "from this time forth I serve the Lord." But there are others who would be cowed down by it. There are some men who are very accessible to such resistance.

In all these ways, and in many others that I cannot describe, men's interests are assailed. And do not you begin to see that there is a great deal of meaning in the declaration, "A man's foes shall be they

of his own household"? Sometimes I have read the passage. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me;" and you have wondered about that; but do not you see, as I analyze the experiences of actual life, how full the world is of that which requires just such dealing as the battle and struggle through which we are passing?

Then there are persons who are peculiarly sensitive to praise. The love of approbation is strong in them. They love favor, though they may not love flattery nor compliment. There is a subtle quality in them such that they cannot bear to be on the shady side of men's opinions. They are peculiarly happy when the sun shines on their souls through other men's favor. And under such circumstances it is peculiarly the case that men are assailable through the direct or indirect influence of their love of praise. Therefore it is that a cautious and delicate-minded man can say things that will rankle like poison in a young man's heart;—and how much more a woman! A woman's eye, her tongue being mute, can, with one glance, at the right time, cut a man like a lancet. A circle can, by a judicious silence, make a man feel as though the fogs of New Foundland were on him. A man by skillful treatment can be made to feel as if he were a red-hot iron on an anvil, with strokes falling on him thick and fast. And to some natures such dealing is enough to well nigh crush the life out of them. They shrink and shrivel under it. Pity them. Do not blame them too severely. It is their weakness, though it may be their crime. While they are weak there, you are weak in some other point, so that you need succor, too. There are many persons who would fain escape as a bird from the snare of the fowler; but they cannot go against this raillery—this battle of ridicule waged with eyes and tongues. Raillery mingled with kindness, and employed in a winning way, is an admirable instrument for innocent pleasure. But have you never seen it wielded as a weapon of mischief?

Then there is the battle of dissuasion—not persuasion to great evils, perhaps, nor to any immoralities; but dissuasion from a higher life. "Do not give yourself up," it is said to one who is awakened to his spiritual condition, "to God and spirituality. Live among men, and be a man. Stay with us. Do not leave us." And it is very hard for a generous soul, a true nature that believes in fidelity to every relation, to go out from the circle to which he belongs, against their affectionate appeals. Ye are my witnesses, many of you.

It is not unfrequently the case that when one is disposed to rise from the level of a common enjoyable life to a truly religious and spiritual life, those in his circle attempt to stop him by undermining his religion. They say to him, "Religion is well enough in its way.

it has good uses; but there is nothing in it at the bottom." And frequently when one is inspired with such nascent religious desires, some old head takes him in hand, apparently to probe him and see how much he knows, but really to unsettle his faith, and put in its place doubt and scepticism. And it is much easier to unsettle a man's faith than to establish it. It is ten thousand times harder to remove a doubt than to infix it. It is, perhaps, with some difficulty that you can arouse a jealous thought between two friends; but when it is once aroused, it is like salt-rheum in the blood, which breaks out here and there on the body, and cannot be dispelled by medicine. And doubts—especially fundamental doubts—are diseases of the blood spiritual. Sometimes they wound the soul to its very slaying.

Men also hold up to those who are disposed to escape, the lives of Christians. They bring before them all the scandal of the church. They call their attention to the partialisms of men's lives. They remind them of the possibilities of their not succeeding. "Even if religion is true," say they, "it is a great journey that you are not fitted for, and that, therefore, you have unwisely undertaken. Though there might be circumstances in which it would be wise for you to undertake it, those circumstances do not now exist."

Active measures are frequently taken to prevent men from following their convictions and entering upon a Christian life. They are treated as if they were patients. Little parties are gotten up for them. Most agreeable offices of kindness are discharged toward them. Their interest, their fear, and their love of praise, are brought into the service. All the ways in which the mind can be subtly and gently played upon to turn them back from the course which they believe to be right, and which they would fain pursue, are resorted to.

Then comes the last and the hardest battle—that of love, "Oh, my wife," says the husband, "I feel like death to have you go. What am I? I cannot go. And we have lived together so many years without any discord, that it seems very hard that you should go, and that we should be separated. It is a *divorce*. I cannot live so." It is harder than to face Mount Sinai, where true lovers are united together and one turns to the other and says, "It is fatal. There cannot any longer be unity of life. There can no longer be any such thing as that perfect sympathy which, like a chorded harp, gives out harmonious music from all the different strings. If you get into a religious state of mind, both of us will be wretched."

It is when such things as these take place, that the words, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," dovelop their true meaning. When read glibly as they often are, they sound like distant drum-taps in time of peace: but they sound like the long roll in time of war

when brought down to home-instances like those to which I have alluded.

"*He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.*" This is anguish, when a soul is enlightened to feel its duty of allegiance to God, and the power of the world to come is upon it. As birds, when their time of emigration comes, and they feel the impulse to fly to the summer-land, and will not be stopped, either by the snap of the fowler's gun, or by the swoop of the hawk, or by any solicitation, but rise, and fly through night and through day, to find that summer-land; so souls feel the fascinating call of God, and, rising, soar—and must, because the Holy Ghost is upon them.

Where, in cases like these, the brother pleads with the sister, or the sister with the brother, or the parent with the child, or the child with the parent, or the husband with the wife, or the wife with the husband, or the lover with the loved, it rends the very soul. And yet, no drop of blood was ever shed that one might be true to his own convictions, that God did not make that the seat of joy, unmeasured and abounding. Oftentimes the very pang and anguish that are suffered, are the labor pains by which other souls are born into God's kingdom. Frequently, under such circumstances, simple, calm fidelity breaks the snare and the charm that holds back one who is called to go and appear in Zion and before God. How knowest thou, oh pleading husband! but that God will give thee thy wife? How knowest thou, oh pleading wife! but that God will give thee thy husband?

There are other cases that I cannot mention, from reasons of delicacy—the pleadings of partners of common wrong with each other—the great book unread here, but in the light of God's countenance like the mysterious characters that are written in invisible ink, and that come out on being exposed to light and heat,—the great unwritten book which contains a record of men's thoughts, and feelings, and silent transgressions. There is nothing like the unexpressed life of souls in this world. And there linger within the precincts of this house those who know that if it were not for these holdings back, these golden fetters, these silken chains, they would start up instantly and be men in Christ Jesus. And woe, immortal and terrible, to the guilty one who slays the soul of his partner, and calls it love! It is betraying Christ again with a kiss, to betray one of his disciples with a kiss to his damnation. Let him go. Do not hinder him.

It only remains that I should speak of the modes of resistance that one may lawfully set up against these things.

First, it should be made clear that you are in earnest, and sincere, and that that which is upon you is not a mere freak and whim. In

other words, that very course which you frequently take, half to conceal, and half to cover with a laugh the self-ridiculing smile, is very fatal. That which will set you right sooner than anything else, is evidence that your feelings of aspiration and yearning for a higher life are real and deep. If God has called you to such a life, and you have heard and know his tones, do not let anything beguile you into the pretence that it is not the voice of God, and that it is but little to you. Be in earnest. Let men see that you are in earnest. Take ground, and having taken it keep it, whatever it may cost you. Take it at the earliest possible moment. You must resort to no half-way measures, for that will increase the fervor of your enemies, and give them hope that with redoubled exertion they can win you back to yourself, and your irresolution will be but the occasion of your being plied more vigorously with attempts to balk and destroy your better hopes and purposes. Be resolute. Be sincere.

If possible, take with you your companions. How blessed is that solution where the whole household go! "If thou *wilt* go, Oh my wife!" let it be said, "then I will go with thee." If Adam went with Eve in the first transgression, so since, full often, when Eve would pluck the apple from the tree of life, love has carried her companion with her. How blessed it is for the whole circle to go! But if you are ready to go, and your associates will not go, wait not for them. Of all the snares and blandishments by which you will be beset, the worst will be those by which Satan will attempt to carry you back again. Do not be deceived by those who say, "Do not go too fast and too far, and you will carry your friends all with you." While you are waiting you will lose your fervor and impetus. The tide will run out, and you will be left. The golden opportunity should never be neglected for an hour Go thou with them if they will go with you, but go without them if they will not. For of all voices there is none that ought to sound in your ear with such authority of love as the Voice that calls you. It is the voice of the Bridegroom. Let not the Spirit of God plead in vain with any man's reason, or conscience, or sense of manhood to-night. Count not yourselves unworthy to be called. Cast not these things behind you.

Above all things, if you are endeavoring for yourself, and against social entanglements, to rise to a true Christian life, remember that you need, and that you shall have, the help of God. It is a lonely way that the repentant sinner walks; yet there are stars behind the clouds for him. It is a most solitary path that he who has done wrong and means to do right, has to tread; but remember, as you tread it in all the pain of solitude, that if you could but see you would behold the form of Another walking by your side. There is One that says to you in the

hour of your discouragement, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." That faithful Chief, that loving Christ, that Shepherd, who seeks the lost sheep, and, if they cannot walk, bears them in his arms; he that redeemed your soul with his own precious blood, and seeks to lift you from a lower to a higher plane—from ignominy, dishonor, disgrace and death, to the joy of his ownership—he will never leave you nor forsake you.

If God is calling any man to-night, listen to him. If God is drawing any man to him to-night, do not hold back. Oh! my friend, *what will it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?* Oh! generous and loving nature, snared in the wrong, but now repenting toward the right, let nothing draw you back. It is life if you go forward, and death if you go back. The call will never come again as it has come. Forsake father, and mother, and brother, and sister; give up all friendship, and each pleasure, and every prospect. One single moment in the forefront of that all-rewarding heaven, where Christ, in the glory of his Father's kingdom, and God's angels shall meet you, will more than repay you for that which you suffer here.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, thou Heart of love, in whom is our life and all the source of our joy. Out of our troubles we come—out of temptations, and sorrows, and burdens, and weariness, and doubts and despondency. How many paths lead hither! What path is there that brings not those that are wise to thy feet, O blessed One of the pierced hand and wounded side! And who that has ever come to thee in real need, and lifted up the heart, and cried out, does not desire to come again? It is the memory of thy graciousness, it is thy tenderness, which to us is more than a mother's, and more than a lover's, that brings us again and again. Thou invisible Presence, thou mute but mighty Comforter, unspeaking, and yet of blessed converse, how hast thou turned the night into day to us! How hast thou given us strength for weakness! How hast thou snatched victory out of defeat! How hast thou given us exaltation in the midst of temptation, and lifted us above our adversaries, and set our feet in strong places, and put a song of rejoicing in our mouth! Oh! how many escaped souls are here to-night, that could lift up voices in praising thy faithfulness and thy tender mercies toward them! How many there are over whom the waves would have gone if it had not been for thine outstretching hand! How many were foundered when thou didst come to them walking on the wave! O thou Saviour! it is not the world that thou hast saved, any more than the hearts of individual ones before thee. How many can say that thou art *their* Savior! How many souls, at the mention of thy name, are as bells struck, and full of sweet sounds that utter thy praise! We thank thee for the past. We look hopefully into all that way where thou throwest the light of thy great love. Thou art the *new* and *living* way of God—not the way of our reason, nor the way of our resolution, nor the way of our strength, nor the way of our skill. Thou lendest thyself to every needy soul. Thy strength, and wisdom are over us all, as ours are over our little children. In thee we are saved from storms without and temptations within. In thee we are made victors over the flesh. We are more and mightier than they that are against us. We can set ourselves against the full flow of circumstances and yet maintain ourselves—yea, and go forward in the right. Thou, O God, dost fill the soul with present joy, and all prophecy of coming good; and thou canst do easily the things which we most need to have done, and which are impossible to our power.

Now we commend ourselves again to thee, O blessed Lover! In the bosom of thy promises we nestle, and are at rest. There thou dost brood us. There thou dost care for us, and feed us. We rejoice in this paternity, in this majesty of mercy, in this endlessness of love, in all this wonderful grace, and kindness, and sweetness, and mercy; and the goodness of God shall lead us to repentance. Not against thee, O blessed Savior! will we let our hearts run. Not against thee shall audacious sins any longer have liberty. We desire to-night, in a covenant of love, faithfully to be kept, to yield ourselves to thee, to love thee and serve thee, and to walk in those ways of honor and truth where thou hast planted peace. And if there be struggling souls that desire to do this, come, O Spirit of the living God! to their rescue to-night. If there be those that are looking wistfully, beckon to them, and say to them, Come. If there be those that are coming, but very slowly, and with very doubtful tread, oh! give to them, we beseech of thee, power by which they shall be able to do all things. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt rescue any that are imperiled, and deliver those that are ensnared, if not for their sake, yet for thine own. For thine own name's sake, do works of mercy and of wonder in our midst. Turn back those that have gone away. Reclaim the backsliding. Save even those that have given up their faith, and their love, and their service. Deliver those that are bond-slaves unto sin. Go down again into the very shadow of death, thou all-seeking Savior, to release the captive, to open the doors of despair, and to bring up from the borders of the dreary land those that without thee are hopelessly lost.

And so, we beseech of thee that this place may be filled with the signs of rejoicing of those captives who have been rescued and brought home. And may thy name be honored in the midst of thy churches, and thy glory shine in all the land. Spread revivals from church to church. Give to thy ministering servants more power, and to thy

truth more effect. And may we hear on every side of the growth of thy kingdom. And we pray that thou wilt grant that thy kingdom may come in all the world, and thy will be done on earth as in heaven. And to the Father, Son and Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken to-night, to needy souls. Quicken some that are dying. Quicken some that are dead, and bring them to life again. Draw toward thyself the ensnared. Open the prison doors. Break the cord. Destroy thou the chain and the shackle. We beseech of thee that thou wilt breathe a pure air upon the fetid and poisonous atmosphere in which many breathe. Disenchant those that live in a sorcery of the soul. Oh! that thou wouldst deliver those that are bound. Come thou again to seek and to save. May we hear the joyful testimony, may we hear the songs of release of those who are going home from captivity. Glorify thyself, and quicken us, and stir us up to take part in this glorious work of the Lord. Build up thy church. Comfort thy people everywhere. Advance thy banner in all the earth. And at last may every land, and every nation, and all peoples see thy salvation. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

CHRIST, THE DELIVERER.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. vii. 24, 25.

When one has wandered a night and a day in the wilderness, is discouraged, is on the point of giving up the struggle for rescue, and he sees, suddenly, the gleam of a light—he knows that the road is near, and a dwelling house. He exclaims, "Thank God! I am saved." And yet, he does not stop to point out all the particulars which led to that exclamation.

In this wise I interpret this abrupt note of victory. It is not a statement so much as a cry of joy; not an explanation, but a triumph. Further on, Paul reasons; but here he exults. God in Jesus Christ is the consummation of that profound mystery of human life, which all men in all ages have observed.

Rising above all competitors, we find man standing at the head of earthly tribes by his complexity; by his power in variety and harmony. He is not so strong, to be sure, as the lion; and yet he can exert greater physical power, because he has the control of all nature. He is not so swift as the deer; and yet he can produce and control a speed far beyond his. He is not so patient and enduring as the ox, nor so sharp-eyed as the eagle. In any single *physical* quality man finds some superior in the races of animals; and yet, in every such instance, that which is lacking in special organ and function is made up in the final results which are wrought, even in material things, by his reason—by his control of natural law. To man only is it given to clothe himself with all the powers of creation. The sun is his minister. The winds and the waters are his servants. The earth, as a granary in which ages have stored up treasures, opens to his key. While he is, in special organs, inferior to one and another of the animals, he is collectively, and by his relations, through reason, with nature, by far the superior of every one, and reaches, through his faculties, a preëminence in those very respects in which he falls below the animals in single

Sunday Morning, Dec. 5, 1869. Lesson: Rom. vii. Hymns (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 199, 243, 268.

organs. And yet, large as he is, transcending every other creature that we know of, man is not happy—not in any proportion to his nature, and to the hints and foregleams which that nature gives. The history of the race is a sad one. Man knows more of everything else than of himself. He can manage the physical globe far better than he can his own body.

The first grand fact, then, that meets the student, is the system of elaborate physical forces given to man as a creature living upon the material globe. He has, in being clothed with flesh, all the points of contact with the physical world that the ox or the falcon has. He is born; in his early days he feeds like a plant; he grows up with all the instincts and passions of animal life. Without such passions and such appetites he could not maintain his foothold upon the earth. All the very passions against which we strive through life are admirable, and divinely created. No account can be given of the divine wisdom and benevolence in the construction of men, which leaves out those very propensities which are continually destroying our peace, and against which we arm our virtue. The reason of their mischief lies in their relative power, or in their predominance over other elements of our being.

For, now, the next grand fact which we observe, is the existence of supra-animal elements also in man. He is not an animal alone and only. He is a creature of affections, which, in variety, compass and force, leave the lower creation in a vivid contrast. He is a creature endowed with a reason of many parts, and with an imagination which recreates in beauty whatever it looks upon. He is a creature of moral sentiment and of spiritual life—that is, a life which deals with invisible qualities and supra-sensuous realities.

These additions to man's physical economy are distinctive and pre-eminent. In them lies the value of human life. Not in the things in which he agrees with the animal is man precious, but in those things which grow up after that, and rise above it—his affections, his sentiments, his will, his reason.

The next fact which we observe is, that men have learned but very imperfectly, and as a race have not at all learned, how to carry themselves so that every part of their nature shall have fair play. Regarding man as a race, the animal propensities and the passions are always predominent. Looking at the world collectively, the force of human life is at the base. The energy, the continuity, the prodigious facility of the appetites and the passions carries them beyond their true animal function, and makes them a disturbing and antagonistic force among the gentler and nobler faculties of the human soul.

Here, then, begins the conflict that is waged with some degree of

power, I hope, in all, between man's *physical life*, as represented by his appetites and passions, and his *moral life*, including his social affections and his moral and spiritual part. This is the strife which has been going on in some degree in better natures since the world began—the strife of gentleness, and of purity, and of joy, and of peace, and of faith, against selfishness, and pride, and appetites of various kinds.

To all souls that have been raised to their true life, and that begin to bring forth a manhood of moral qualities, the struggle has been always severe, continued, and often piteous in the extreme. A man who can read the seventh of Romans, which I read in your hearing this morning, without a sigh, or a tear, or any sign or thought that it represents any part of his experience, must be very high or very low in human life. To have the power over our whole organization without a despotism of our animal and selfish nature—this is the very problem of practical life. How can I maintain the fulness of every part, and yet have harmony and relative subordination, so that the appetites shall serve the body, and the affections not be darkened nor dragged down by the appetites; so that the moral sentiments and the reason shall shine clear and beautiful? This is that which every man proposes to himself, in some dark and obscure way.

There is a thread running through all ages, connecting men of all races, appearing in all religions, in all philosophies, and in the experience of single men reared in the most diverse views. It marks the line of conflict between the body and the soul. The world has not been able to harmonize nature within man, to keep each part in its place, and to keep down the animal force from insurrection and despotism. And there is one long plaint and wail coming up from the hearts of good men from the beginning of history—*The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now.*

This being the philosophy, or rather statement of facts in regard to to the causes of that disturbance and perpetual conflict which is going on, what remedies have been proposed and suggested?

To give way, in the first place, to that which is strongest, and to live for animal joy, has been one special method of settling the conflict. Kill the higher feelings, let them die, and then let the lower ones romp and riot like animals in a field—this gives a brilliant opening to life, if a man feels that he may give a loose rein to his animal passions; but it gives a dismal close to it. It may make youth sparkle, but it will make old age dreary. For what is more hideous than a sullen old man burnt out with evil?

When I see men suppressing all qualms, ridding themselves of all struggles, and with joyous health, with alacrity and alertness, with gaiety, and with sparkle, going into the full enjoyment of sensuous life, I think

of a party entering the Mammoth Cave with candles enough, if sparingly used, to carry them forward and bring them back, but setting them all on fire at once, not heeding the warning of the guide, dancing and wandering on till they are many and many a mile from the mouth of the Cave, when one light after another begins to flicker, and burn low, and go out. Now, alarmed, they with haste turn back. One candle burns out, and then another. A dim twilight begins to surround them; and then darkness comes on. Yet they are miles from the exit. They grope about with outcries to each other. Some, wandering wide, plunge down chasms. Some give up, and lie down in despair.

The world is a cave. They that burn out all their powers and passions in the beginning of life, when youth enjoys, at last wander in great darkness, far from the exit, and lie down, one here and another there, to mourn and die. And the best prescription that men of pleasure have been able to give to cure this conflict between the animal and the divine in man, is, *Eat, drink, for to-morrow ye die!*

Another remedy has been in superstition. Men have sought to cover this conflict, rather than to heal it. This is the way of superstition. It deprecates results. It does not know how to change causes. It persuades men that by some superficial offerings, by some attainments, by some sacrifices of one kind or another, by some placation of the gods, a man's conflicts resulting from sin shall all be set right. Superstition neither mends nor strengthens what is good, nor weakens what is harmful, nor brings real peace, though it may banish sharp alarm.

Others have compromised. They have lowered the demands of moral sense. They have yielded, in no inconsiderable degree, to their selfish nature. They have sought to bring down the top, and to bring up the bottom. *Morality* is usually the name which is given to this compromise. Not that morality is a thing to be despised, and injurious; but simple morality, which is an average of man's conduct with the customs and laws of the time in which he lives, is an empirical remedy, and comes nowhere near touching that radical and fundamental conflict which there is between the body and the soul—the flesh and the spirit.

Then comes philosophy, and deals with it in two ways. It propounds to men maxims and wise rules. It expounds the benefit of good conduct, and the evils of bad conduct. And then it proposes certain rules of doing what we cannot help, and of suffering what we cannot throw off. And it is all very well. So is rose-water very good, and cologne water, where a man is wounded unto death. They are not less fragrant because they are not remedial; but if they be regarded as remedies, how poor are they! And philosophy is good;

but it is not good to cure that fundamental conflict that is waged in every man's nature..

Then comes scientific empiricism, and prescribes diet, and exercise, and regularity, and the observance of natural laws, and proper occupations; all of which are good and excellent, and all of which ought to follow in the train of piety. Much good is there in these prescriptions, as collaterals and auxiliaries; but how many men in life know these laws? How many men are so placed that if they did know them, they would be able to use them? Whose rising in the morning is at his own control? Nine parts in ten of men are controlled in their outgoing and incoming by the inexorable law of business. Other men's interests, or your pockets, determine what you shall eat and what you shall drink. Not they alone most need these things who live in comfort, but the myriad poor. And to the masses of mankind what has philosophy to say? And if it says anything, how many of them are able to know what is wise or just? And if they know it, how many have power to hold themselves to what they do know? If there is no remedy for mankind but what philosophy brings, there is none. You might as well take a babe of days, and place a medicine chest before it, and say, "Rise, and select the right medicine, and you shall live," as to place philosophy before the masses of men, and tell them to appropriate it. It is mockery.

What, then, is the final remedy? What does Christianity offer in this case? Here is this multiform creature, man, built on a common basis, with human appetites and passions, whose misery comes from that fundamental strife which is always going on between the body and the soul, which are at odds and oppositions, and will not be reconciled to each other.

And what does Christianity undertake to do? It undertakes to bring to man a higher power than his own, and apply it on that side of his mind where it seems beneficial. It undertakes to so bring God directly and personally within the reach of every being in the world, that he shall exert a controlling power on the spiritual and intellectual realms of man's nature, and, by giving power to it, overbalance and overbear the despotism of the radical passions and appetites.

Or, more distinctly, there is made a representation of God in Christ which brings him within the line of the ordinary understanding. That very thing which many men seem to despise and shred off, I cling to, in the revelation of Christ's divinity. Many say that the idea of God, the Supreme, the Infinite, the Ineffable, being reduced to the compass of the flesh, sleeping, being weary, and wearing the infirmities of the human body, is inconsistent with the true conception of God. Yes, it is inconsistent with the God of a poem, or a philosophy But for a man

that is crushed, for a man that is dying for want of help, the idea of a God that is willing to come down to him, and take his likeness, and put himself in his place that he may rescue him, is blessed.

Who are they that men most esteem as manly? There is a story of a missionary—a Moravian—who was sent out to the West Indian Islands to preach the Gospel to the slaves; but he found that they were driven so hard, that they went forth so early, and came back so late, and were so spent, that they could not hear. At night they came from their toil to gnaw their crust, and roll in on their straw, and snore through their brief hours of repose; and the bell and the whip brought them out again by light in the morning, to go to the field; and he saw that he could not reach them. He was a white man, and they were black. It was the white man that oppressed them. There was nobody to preach to them unless he could accompany them in their labor. So he went and sold himself to their master, who put him in the gang with them. For the privilege of going out with these slaves, and making them feel that he loved them, and would benefit them, he worked with them, and suffered with them; and while they worked, he taught; and as they came back, he taught; and he won their ear; and the grace of God sprang up in many of these darkened hearts. He bowed himself to their condition, and took upon him their bondage, in order that he might show his sympathy and love for them.

Tell me, is not that the very epitome of what Christ did, who, in order that he might reach the poor and needy, and bring the power of the truth to bear on their understandings, and mitigate their sufferings, and rescue them, and empower their moral nature against their animal nature, "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"? That is the story over again of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the story of the Lord Jesus Christ is *God manifest in the flesh.*

Now, if you are searching for a God that shall be radiant in heaven, where everybody is happy, and everything is symmetric and ideally perfect, take you the God of your conception, and go live among my fellow men, and see their tears, and hear their groans. It is for me to look at men's struggles. It is for me to see men that are dropping down as men slide down a cliff, clutching at what shall hold them up. It is for me to listen to men that are in prison, to the sick, and to the dying. It is for me to say, "Where is there help for those who are in misery, and whose struggle is going the wrong way? And I behold the Lord Jesus Christ standing in the midst of men, and saying, "Come unto me. Take my yoke upon you. My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Ye shall find rest for your souls." *God saving men*

can never be defined in any other way than by saying "Christ!" This representation of God as a patient Teacher, a personal Friend, and the Mediator of sin, supremely good and beautiful in himself, and in instant and intense sympathy with every soul that will open to him, is the representation which we need for our soul's distress. An order and an economy by which this whole power of God shall be brought within the conditions of our understanding, may be personally and perpetually ours. That by which the greatness of God's nature acts upon our spiritual nature, and gives it tone and power, is, on the last analysis, it seems to me, the philosophy of the action upon the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God made personal to you and me.

Do not you know how many things you can do under personal influence that you cannot in any other way? My father said to me, when I was a little boy, "Henry, take these letters and go down to the Post-Office with them." I was a brave boy; and yet I had imagination. And thousands of people are not as cowardly as you think. Persons with quick imaginations, and quick sensibility, people the heavens and the earth, so that there are a thousand things in them that harder men do not think of and understand. I saw behind every thicket some shadowy form; and I heard trees say strange and weird things; and in the dark concave above I could hear flitting spirits. All the heaven was populous to me, and the earth was full of I know not what strange sights. These things wrought my system to a wonderful tension. When I went pit-a-pat along the road in the dark, I was brave enough; and if it had been anything that I could have seen, if it had been anything that I could have fought, it would have given me great relief; but it was not. It was only a vague, outlying fear. I knew not what it was. When father said to me, "Go," I went—for I was obedient. I took my old felt hat, and stepped out of the door; and Charles Smith (a great thick-lipped black man, who worked on the farm, and who was always doing kind things) said to me, "Look here, I will go with you." Oh! sweeter music never came out of any instrument than that. The heaven was just as full, and the earth was just as full as before; but now I had somebody to go with me. It was not that I thought he was going to fight for me. I did not think there was going to be any need of fighting, but I had somebody to lean on; somebody to care for me; somebody to help and succor me. Let anything be done by direction, let anything be done by thought or rule, and how different it is from its being done by personal inspiration!

"Ah! are the Zebedees, then, so poor? John, take a quarter of beef and carry it down, with my compliments. No, stop; fill up that chest, put in those cordials, lay them on the cart, and bring it round, and I will drive down myself." Down I go; and on entering the

house I hold out both hands, and say, "Why, my old friend, I am glad I found you out. I understand the world has gone hard with you. I came down to say that there is nothing between you and me. We are on good terms, just as we always were. You have one friend, at any rate. Now do not be discouraged; keep up a good heart. I have brought you down a few articles for your comfort" And I empty all the things, and I see tears beating in his eyes, like rain on a pane of glass in summer; and I go away as soon as I can—for, hard as ingratitude is to bear, it is not so hard to bear as gratitude. And when I am gone, the man wipes his eyes, and says, "I did not know where I should feed my children, and I am thankful for the meat and the other things; but God knows that that man's shaking my hands gave me more joy than all that he brought. It was *him* that I wanted." I tell you, when men are in trouble, it is the human soul that cures and feeds. It is one soul lying against another.

This was epitomized by the old prophet, when he went into the house where the widow's son lay as one dead, and put his hands on the child's hands, and stretched himself across the child's body, and the spirit of life came back. Oh! if, when men are in trouble, there were some man to measure his whole stature against them, and give them the warmth of his sympathy, how many would be saved!

Now, it is just that which God in Christ Jesus does. He comes down to this world, and says, "You are all in this mortal conflict. You have all sinned, and are sinning. And you do not know the way by which you can get back. But I have found it." What is the way? "*I*, your loving God, *I*, your atoning Saviour, am that way. Love me, and let me walk with you all the time, and I will see that you have a perpetual consciousness of such a power as will give advantage to the upper side, and not to the lower side any more." That is the philosophy of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ—a great soul come down to take care of little souls; a great heart beating its warm blood into our little pinched hearts, that do not know how to get blood enough for themselves; a great nature, with the experience of ages, and with the infinite love of the effulging God, that comes down and says to every poor creature, "My arms are open. Come. Cannot you walk? Let me take you up by my own strength, and I will carry you. Love me, and let me love you, and I will save you."

That is Christ loving the human soul. Tell me if there is any better way than that. Tell me if that is not the very way that philosophy has found out. It is this sympathy with men, and this willingness to suffer for them, and bear their burdens, and carry their sins, that cleanses a man's soul. It is the impact on him of God's nature, it is the opening of the soul of God, so that the divine influence flows right

in on him. It is this that gives my upper nature strength, and hope, and elasticity, and victory.

With this exposition, let me make a few points of application.

1. You understand what I mean when I speak of the *depravity* of man. There has been so much mistake, and so much controversy, about it, that I seldom use that term. Not that I do not believe that to be true which wise men have thought who have hitherto used it; but I think it to be infelicitous, and therefore choose to speak of men's *sinfulness* rather than their depravity. I am inclined to let the old war terms die out, and take the new and better ones.

What, then, is a man's depravity? When you say that an army is destroyed, what do you mean? Not that everybody in it is killed; but that, as an army, its complex organization is broken up and scattered. When I say that an organ is utterly spoiled, what do I mean? What would spoil an orchestra? Cutting off every man's head, or smashing every one of the instruments? Yes, that would do it. But it can be done a great deal easier than that Put every single instrument at discord with its fellows, and is not the orchestra spoiled as effectually as it can be? What spoils a watch? Do you need to put it on a stone and grind it to powder, in order to spoil it? Take out the mainspring. "Well," says a man, "The mainspring is gone to be sure: but it is not all spoiled. It is good as far as it goes, is it not?" How far does a watch go that has no mainspring? "Well, the pointers are not useless." Perhaps not for another watch; but what are they good for in a watch that has no mainspring? "There are a great many wheels inside that are not injured." Yes, but what are wheels worth in a watch that has no mainspring? A watch is an organized thing, which requires for its value that every part should be in perfect harmony with every other part. If anything happens to it which prevents all the parts working together harmoniously, it is spoiled. What spoils a compass? Anything which unfits it for doing what it was intended to do. Do you say, "It is good to make some other useful thing of?" That may be; but is it good for anything as a compass?

Now, here is this complex organization, the body, with its various appetites This body has grafted upon it the bud and blossom of the social affections. Still higher branches open out, of spiritual sentiments, that take hold of the invisible, the ineffable and the divine. Here is reason. Here is faith acting through the imagination. And these royalties of the soul are all mixed up. Where conscience ought to be, is pride. Where love ought to be, is selfishness. Where there ought to be the sweet blossoms of the higher sentiments, there are the gnawing insects and coiling serpents of the passions. And the soul is all stirred up its sympathy and harmony are gone. And is it not

ruined? It is not necessary that a man should be all bad to be ruined. No man is bad in everything. Thank God, all men are restrained in various ways, and every man has some virtues and excellences. There are few men who have not some truth, some love, and certain elements of faith. But how many men are there who have a harmonious inward being? A man's moral sentiments ought to be strongest and highest, his social affections ought to be intermediate, and his animal passions ought to be subordinate and entirely obedient. If they are so, he has a beautifully organized and harmonious being. But how few there are that come anywhere near these conditions of organization!

Man is depraved. He has lost that harmony which belongs to a perfect organization. And so he lives to struggle. And the struggle through which he is passing is the cause of human woe, and sorrow. It is that which has drenched this world in tears, and rolled it in blood, and darkened the heavens, and made the history of the past hideous, and the prospect of the future gloomy.

2. We see, based upon the doctrine of man's sinfulness in his unregenerate state, why it is that the divinity of Christ becomes so important in the development of a truly Christian life. It is said that there are many persons who do not believe in the divinity of Christ, but who nevertheless are living Christian lives. Yes, it is true, *in Christian communities*, but not out of them. In Christian communities there are so many churches, and so many thousands of men who do believe in the divinity of Christ, that they throw around about them a reflected light of this truth. A man growing up in that reflected light may go a great way up in the Christian life. But go into a community where there is no such reflected light, and see if you will find men that are thus lifted up.

What we want is not more knowledge. Influence is what we want. The apostle says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." It is power that we want. I do not care for this as a technical question. I do not care for it as a theological question. I am so far from the binding sympathy of the schools, that it would cost me nothing, in a purely philosophical point of view, to take one or another ground on any doctrinal question. But as a living man, having had the experience of my own soul, and having been conversant with the experiences of others, what I want is power. And that is what they lack who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their trouble is weakness. They are elegant, but they are soft. They are refined, but they are inefficient. They may in a thousand philanthropies be efficient; but show me a man who does not believe in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I will show you a man who can-

not take direct hold of the conscience or the soul of a man, and shake him with the power of the judgment to come. I would not preach as a moralist, having preached, so long, as a firm believer in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. For this latter is the teaching of man's utter wreck and ruin, and of the power of love in the Lord Jesus Christ, that takes hold of the imagination, dominates the reason, and goes clear down into the dungeon-depths of a man's passions. God can cleanse the heart. Man cannot. And that God whom we can understand is the God that walked in Jerusalem, that suffered upon Calvary, and that lives again, having lifted himself up into eternal spheres of power, that he might bring many sons and daughters home to Zion.

Whatever, then, obscures this personal divinity in Christ Jesus, whatever keeps it away from a man, is just so far a practical heresy. It may be done by denying technically the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; but it is done otherwise. It is sometimes done doctrinally. It is done, oftentimes, by abstractions, instead of personalities. What a man needs is a divine Friend, present with him, loving him, helping him, and pouring the actual tide of soul-influence in upon him; and anything that takes that away, takes away substantially the divinity and power which there is in Christ.

We see, therefore, the mistake of substituting plans and doctrines and abstractions of government for the personal and living Saviour.

I have received many, many kind letters, well-intentioned, from persons who, while they thought my preaching was edifying to those that were already Christians, did not believe it was exactly the right kind of preaching for those who had not begun to be Christians. And they complained especially because I said so little about the *blood of Christ*, and so little about the *atonement of Christ*, and so little about a *plan of salvation*, and so little about the *cross*.

Now, look back at all these historical phrases. I recognize that once they not only were living terms, but had a distinct relation and benefit in the use of the people by whom they were first employed. I can understand how to the Jews, brought up as they were, "atonement," "sacrifice," and "blood" might have come home with fresh and vivid meaning. But you have never seen a bullock killed for sacrifice; you live two thousand years from anything of the sort; and yet you are keeping up the terms of sacrifice and slaughter. And I hold that while we may use these terms reverently, because they are Scriptural, and have a certain artificially sacred association connected with them, it is far better to take the living God, and bring him, by the language which is given us *to-day*, to the bosom and heart and confidence of men.

Tell me, have I failed to preach a living Christ? Tell me, have I failed to preach a Christ burning with sympathy for sinful men? Tell

me, have I failed to show men, dying in their sins, that there was a love of God that could put its arms about them, and cleanse them, and lift them up into its own felicity, if they were willing? Have I been faithless to this? Then God forgive me! for all my ministry has been empty. But to me the heaven has been one magnificent procession of divinities. To me Christ has been all in all, Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, ever-present, and ever-living. I have, to be sure, not preached a *system* of revelations. I have not used the abstract term *plan of salvation*. I have not talked about *the atonement*. I have not undertaken to sound abstract doctrines in your ears. I have done better than that; and I call God to witness that it is better. I have preached a living Jesus, as a Brother, a Friend, a Saviour, an ever-loving God; and this is better than preaching any of these abstractions. It is better than preaching any of the old symbolic forms of Scripture, and especially better than preaching those dogmas that have been constructed by philosophy in modern times or mediæval days. I hold that the true preaching is to make every man feel that God has had compassion on him; that God, instead of being afar off, is near; that he is powerful; that in the struggle which men are waging with pride and selfishness, with the appetites and passions, they are not alone; that not only are the heavenly hosts spectators, but chiefly He is a spectator who died for them, and ever intercedes for them.

I have preached this. It is right preaching. If there was more of it, theology would not be so dead, and churches would not be so thin. It is because preaching is usually doctrinal and abstract that it does not touch men, and that they do not want it. What man wants who is striving with an infirmity, is to be told, "God does not hate you. He feels for you. He has shown it in that he has suffered for you. And as he did once in Jerusalem, so will he do again. It is the essential, inherent, eternal nature of God, to give himself for the rescue of those who are poor."

Man is low down. His guiding light blazes yonder. With every step upward he is coming nearer and nearer to himself, because he is coming nearer to his God. One man is tempted with lust; another with pride; another with avarice; another with a domineering ambition; another with an appetite for drunkenness and gluttony. Here come men, with these various experiences, and cluster before God. Is there any redemption for them? Is there any remedy for their troubles? Men hate them. Lust hisses at them. A rod of iron is wielded over them in the community. Men that do wrong very soon become discouraged and outcast. And they need help. The point of sympathy and succor in the whole universe is in the heart of the revealed God—in Jesus Christ.

A snip runs aground in a high wind. The men are beaten off. They are a mile from the shore. While one and another go down, some more stalwart arm buffets the waves. What with the wind and the waves and his own tugging endeavors, he reaches at last so near the shore that he can put his foot to the sand. At last, when he is almost spent, a wave leaves him, as it rolls out surging seaward, and he is on the land. And oh! if he could haste to secure his footing; but back it comes, roaring up to him, rushing around and beyond him, and swings him out again. Fainter, but with pluck to the last, he strives once more to come up on the beach, and maintains his foothold, and again the wave leaves him. But again it comes and sweeps him out. So it plays with him as a cat with a mouse, till by and by his strength is gone, and he collapses like the rags that are on him, and he, carried as the water wills, is drowned.

So I see men who have gone wrong striving to reform. I see men that have broken down the laws of health in their own bodies, men who by drink and gluttony and lust are consuming the marrow of their life, seeking to get on shore again, and escape. And they are almost saved, and would be quite, if it were not that temptations come rushing in, and sweep them off from their feet. Is there nobody to pity them? Are men like the solitary mariner on a desolate coast, whose whole strife is in the night, and who is without a spectator? No, *no!* God is doing something else besides brightening the sun and oiling the stars! God sits in heaven to love. There are secrets of God's providence, and wonder-working ways of God that will yet flame in blessed disclosure. God's loving heart is the source of that circulating blood which, going through all the globe, is restoring life, and helping men.

Are your father and mother dead? No. God is your Father and your Mother. Do you say, "Nobody cares for my soul!" The outstretched arms of Him that suffered are about you. There is a Christ who believes in men, thinks for men, longs for men, and strives for men. And there is no man that has gone so wrong but that, if he will, he may be clean, may be strong, and may be saved.

This Jesus Christ I preach to you. I do not believe any man will make an important victory over himself without this divine help. I do not believe any man will escape without a ransom. I do not believe any man who is whelmed in sin, and whose sin has bound him hand and foot, is going to be rescued, till the revelation of the glory of God in Christ Jesus has come into his soul.

Why, a sinful man is like the man in the castle, whose story amused our youth. His hands are bound. His feet are fettered. Thick walls, windows far up, heavy doors, many bolts, and jailors, make his escape impossible. So he only awaits the day of execution.

But as he sleeps, some night, a strange dream haunts him, of home. He thinks his mother has come to him. But, starting up, he sees that there stands beside him a beauteous form, who says to him, "Make haste! Lift your hands, that I may release them." And she takes off the chains. She has beheld him, and she knows his name, and love has brought her there. It is the castle-keeper's daughter. "Lift up your feet," she says, "that I may set them free." What he could not do for himself, love and mercy are doing for him. "Now, follow me silently." The guards are all put to sleep, or out of the way. The door is opened; he never could have opened it. The passageways are threaded; he never could have found his way through them. He feels again the midnight air beginning to lift his damp hair, long matted. He begins to breathe once more the atmosphere of liberty. And can language be found with which, under such circumstances, one would turn to his benefactor, though he had known her but in the hour of his release? Would he not be a monster whose heart did not leap out in thanksgiving at such a time?

You are such prisoners. Jesus is that mercy and that love. He has come down to your dungeon, and unlocked your chains, and inspired you with courage and strength, and opened the door, saying, "I am the way." Follow him; every step will make you stronger. Follow him; every step will take you farther from bondage and nearer to liberty. Follow him; every step will lead you toward your true manhood. Follow him; and soon you shall stand in Zion and before God.

Oh, ye weary! why are you weary when others rest? Oh, ye sick! why do you suffer when others are healed? Oh, starving and hungering! there is bread enough. Oh, dying! there is life for you. Oh, desponding and despairing! look up and rejoice. A great light has arisen to those that sit in the region and shadow of death. Come to Christ, who loves you, who is drawing you, and who has said to each one of you, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that we may feel our way to thee by the way of the cradle; by the way of home; by the way of father and mother. Not when we are lifted up where science carries us, and where reason leads us—not when we deal with these things alone, can we find thee out; but when our hearts are warm with love—that love which leads us to abase ourselves, to be weak for the sake of the weak, to walk with the lowly for the sake of the lowly; that love which denies itself, and counts self-denial a privilege; that love which watches and waits, and is long-suffering and kind. Then when we are in those blessed affections, thou tellest us to look up and call thee Father, and ourselves sons, and we shall understand both thee and our relations to thee. And so, in the realm of love, where thou sittest to-day, the universal Father, we seek thee, not coming as if we were thy sons in glory, infinitely removed, but full of ignorance, scarcely able to walk. We draw near to thee as little children; and not only as little children, but as fractious and disobedient children. We have not come simply because without thee we perish. There is something that longs for thee within us. There is the voice that will not be hushed. There is the soul that is sick without thee, and that is homesick without assurance of heaven. There is the memory of all thy past goodness. There is the memory of our own struggles upon which thou didst place the victory. There is the memory of our defeats, and of our dungeon darkness which thou didst visit. There is the memory of that peace which passeth all understanding, and which hath come to us. Even as the dove came and sat upon our Master, so upon us hath come the heavenly dove. We remember all thy dealings with us, all the mercies of thine open heart and thine outstretched hand; and we come again. As they that walk forth from the winter toward the summer, and remember again all the things that are coming, and all the sweet smell of the field, and all the unrolling leaves, and all the fragrance of the quick-coming flowers that are before them, though they have been hidden long; so when we turn toward thee from the winter and darkness of our earthly life, and we remember again what things have been; and thou seemest to us most glorious, not because thou art larger than the sun, and brighter, not because of the infiniteness that is in thee, but because of thy goodness, thy mercy, thy gentleness and thy tenderness. If thou hadst with sternness looked over all the way in which we have been living, if thou hadst been without care or sympathy for us, if thou hadst appointed the laws of nature to strike the transgressor, and to spare not, saying, The soul that sinneth it *shall* die, we had all perished long ago. For we have wandered about as drunken men. We have reeled to and fro as men storm-tossed. We have not been able to do good to ourselves. And thou, oh Lord God! hast been more kind to us than ever a nurse to the child that was sick—than ever the loving mother to the child that had gone wrong. Thou hast been better than any father ever knew how to be. We bring the glow-worm light of our love to our children; but what is that compared with the ages of thy enduring love, deeper than thought can sound, and wider than the understanding can reach? We are ourselves too selfish to know thee. We do not ourselves know enough love to talk in the language of heaven; and that which we have is too often so allied to things lower and baser, that it is adulterated love. We do not understand our God because we are so far from him, and so unlike him. Yet that does not destroy us; for, as we care for our children long before they know us, as we care for them when sickness takes away their reason and judgment, so thou, looking upon the intemperature of our souls, and seeing all the misery that it threatens, art still patient with us; and thy heart is our nursery. There are we tended and cared for. Oh! that we but knew it. Oh! that we but knew the royalty that is around us. With what meanings would thy providence every day speak to us if our eye was only cleansed from all films, and our hearts from selfishness; if we could at times know that thou didst watch over us in sickness; if in the darkness of our delirium we could understand that thou art not far from us—not far from any one of us: not far from the most sinful; not far from the guiltiest and wickedest. If we but knew these things what hope of recovery would come to us! What joy of salvation! It is thy gentleness that shall save us. Oh Lord

Jesus! it is not the might nor the power of our own will; for the more sternly we stand up, the more brittle are we, and the more easily are we snapped before the breeze. It is thy love, it is thy patience, it is that power working in us—that holy and blessed Spirit of light and comfort. By thy mercy, by thy goodness, by thy gentleness we shall be saved.

And now we pray that every heart that has learned that sweet and blessed secret may turn to thee this morning with thanksgiving. And may every thought sing. May every feeling sing. May we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, to-day. May we look forward beyond the struggle. As even in battle men remember their home to which they hope victory soon shall bring them; so may we, when girded about with trial and temptation, remember the rest which remaineth for the people of God. It is not far off from many of us. Some are already reaching out the hand to open the door. Our crown—thou art holding it forth, if we but knew the shining thereof. May we remember that we are traveling as children in vacation homeward to our Father's house; and may we not therefore care for the weariness of the way, nor for the hindrances, nor for any deprivations. May we steadfastly live by foresight and faith of the joy to come.

But while we are living, may we yet help one another. May we bear one another's burdens. May we see to it that we do not sin by pride, nor by arrogance, nor by selfishness, nor by hardness of heart. May we seek, rather, to dwell evermore as thou dost in infinite love; in generosity of benevolence; in the full patience of God. And we pray that we may go about doing good, though we can go but in small circuits, even as thou didst in the round realm of earth and time.

And we beseeech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt have compassion upon all those for whom we should pray; those that are thralled; those that are ensnared; those that have fallen into the pit; those that are in great darkness and trouble and gloom and despondency; those who are sick; those whose prosperity has been overturned as by the wind from the desert; those who are strangers in a strange land; those who are filled with bitterness and self-condemnation; those that taste remorse; those that are neglected and outcast; those who are in prison, and who are appointed unto death; all that are wandering in poverty and abandonment; all that are steeped in ignorance, in vice and in crime.

O good Lord, what dost thou do? *Is* this world dear to thee? *Dost* thou love man? Our souls shake within us, and we are full of anguish when we look upon the face of man, and see how men betray; how men hate and devour; how full of wretchedness and sin the world is, that goes on repeating itself from generation to generation; how the voice of time is a wail; how all things are most sad to behold. And dost thou sit looking forevermore upon these things? O Lord, reveal the right hand of thy power. Come; for this desolate earth doth wait for thy coming, more than for the coming of summer. Come, oh thou that hast promised salvation, and lead forth thine hosts unto victory. Lift up thy banner that shall never be furled. Speak in that trumpet voice which shall overawe all other sounds. Come, thou that art the promised One, and fulfill all the promises which respect this earth. Bring in Jew and Gentile. Bring in all wandering and heathen nations. Bring in all the scattered and dispersed among our own people. Bring in all that are dying, and that cannot live except in thee.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

THE GOD OF PITY.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."—PSA. CIII. 13, 14.

These words are like a fountain in the wilderness. There is in nature no evidence of pity. The revelation of it in God must have sprung from some other source than the teachings of natural law.

The whole Psalm is wonderful, if it be contrasted with the notions of the age in which it was written respecting God. There was much in the mythology of the civilized heathen which was attractive to the imagination. Certainly, grace and beauty have found no more admirable exposition than in Greek mythology. But the heathen gods were heartless. They were devoid of elevation of sentiment. They were still more devoid of sympathy and pity. And, for that matter, all other mythologies and heathenisms have been utterly bereft of the sentiment of pity in their divinities. They have been just—at least in name; they have been stern; they have been patriotic—for they have been gods of nations; but the element of sympathy—sympathy with human sin, and with the results or effects of it—belongs entirely to the God of the Bible. A higher conception of God's character in its domestic element is not anywhere to be found than this. Pity is a state of kindness excited by the sight of suffering.

1. There is no evidence to be derived of the existence of pity in any overruling Deity, as far as the laws of nature reveal the divine character. I am speaking of the vast organism of the globe, and what we call natural, material laws. Looking out upon things as they are, it would seem almost as if some being of wondrous wisdom and wondrous might had builded a vast machine, illimitable in its might, and as if by its irresistible force it moved on, crushing some, bearing on others, producing a thousand fruits of good, and a thousand mischiefs, itself unknowing and unconscious both of the one and of the other. The benefits that we derive from natural laws are benefits which are given to us, as it were, out of a cold hand. To those who think upon the course of time, and the history of events, nothing excites more surprise, nothing seems stranger, than the cruelties which nature has set

SUNDAY MORNING, Dec. 12, 1869. LESSON: Psa. ciii. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection). Nos. 284 128, 102.

on foot. The organization of the animal kingdom upon the principle of destructiveness; the making of one thing food for another; the ignorance of man in respect to natural law, and in respect to the crushing influences of disobedience of natural law; the want of any sign in nature of sympathy for those who are dying by reason of their ignorance—these things go to show that we must look in some other direction if we would find pity.

The child lies sick, and you throw back the window blinds, and the morning sun falls upon its little head; and it seems for the moment as though the sun did pity the child and the parents, and as though this was its benediction; and yet, if you look out upon the window-sill, it is but the same thing which it is doing for that. It is but just what it would do for an apple that hung upon the bough. It knows no affection. It cares neither for the child, nor for those that suffer for it. The affection is in us, and is transferred to it, if the thought comes to us.

A thousand, and a thousand, and a thousand men fell upon the field of Gettysburgh. The sky did not care; the winds did not care; the earth did not care; the jolly fat soil that sent up a richer crop of grass did not care; the trees that never grew so lush as out of blood (strange food for those trees), did not care. And yet, a million hearts were aching for the scenes that transpired there. In nature there was no knowledge, and no sympathy or pity, nor any sign of any. Looking only on the face of nature, one uninstructed would say, "The God of nature does not know what it is to sorrow for anything, or for anybody." Is nature his? Did he make it? Did he make it on purpose? Did he make it so cruel and heartless? These are questions that one is prone to ask.

The study of nature leads us to see creative design in other respects. Men that study the material world come to have a sense of creative power in an eminent degree. More, they come to have a profound sense of creative wisdom, and wisdom evinced in design, as well.

Nay, there are some indications which, taken by themselves, would lead one to think that he who created this material globe was good, because there are a thousand tendencies that move toward good. But this is combatted by a thousand other tendencies which seem to move toward evil. Nevertheless, a man who is benevolent, and sympathetic, and who takes a large view of the structure of the globe, is likely to suppose that the one who made this natural world was a God of goodness. But if you turn from goodness to taste, to beauty, to exquisite harmony, nobody can doubt that he who created the world was a lover of beauty, and that the elements of beauty were in his nature. Yet, when one studies the structure of this natural world to ascertain what

kind of a being that must be who made it, where is there anything that shall suggest pity? I do not know. It is a most remorseless nature. It is a most unpitying nature. It destroys men. Myriads of lives are crushed out by it every hour. And there is no sorrow, no holding back, no leniency, no sign of pity, anywhere.

Following up the trail of this thought, we shall begin to find, in the lower range of animated creation, a trace—or that germ which finally becomes a trace—of feeling. It first develops itself in the very narrowest form of affection. There seems to be, among some of the lowest orders of animals, the rudest beginnings of affection toward their offspring. It does not seem to go any further than that. Nor is it manifested toward their offspring except in the very slightest measure. But as we rise from the lower to the higher organized animals, there does begin to be a very distinct manifestation of affection. It becomes very strong, very piteous, even, and extremely beautiful. The affection of animals for their young is stronger than their love of their own lives. Among the higher animals there are a few that go further, and seem to show pity. Dogs seem to show pity. And yet *Dog* is the term of reproach the world around. Next to a man a dog and a horse are the best things, I think, on the globe—though they are the most abused and most contemned in speech. In the matter of disinterested and enduring affection—affection that risks all—a dog would put many and many a man to shame. How many men will go and sit down on a master's grave and die of starvation there because he is dead? A dog will!

Not only dogs, but birds show pity. Of course it is in a very limited way, and only occasionally. Not all birds show great affection for their young; but blackbirds have been known, seeing a little robbin that had fallen out of the nest, and had been abandoned by its parents, and was not large enough to feed itself, to go to work and hunt food for it, and bring to it regularly, till it was able to feed itself. This, certainly, was an inflection of pity. It was not the blackbird's own species. The blackbird knew that it was not its own. The blackbird has a way of knowing what is and what is not its own.

So there is, among these lower orders of creation, the first blush of that which in the higher organization of the human race becomes pity.

Among men the feeling of pity is first disclosed in a very clear way. In rude and savage races you see it occasionally. There are some—a few—very noble natures among the lowest savages. They are uncultured, of course, and their kindness is rude. It has never been studious of special ways of showing itself. Nevertheless, it is there, and does manifest itself.

As civilization advances, the brutal and cruel qualities of the races decrease, and pity and compassion increase. The carrying of man up

toward the ideal of manhood, develops him away from force and brutality, and toward pity and compassion. True manhood, therefore, lies in that direction. The further you go from typical man, the more you lose pity as a constituent element The further you go from the rude germ of creation, up toward its perfect development, the more large and ample and glowing becomes the emotion of pity, and the use of it in human life.

The highest nations have it in the largest measure; and among nations, the largest and noblest natures have it in the strongest degrees. Therefore, when we look upon human society, in distinction from the material and organized globe, and take that to be the creation of some personal being, we are prepared to say that there is evidence, if we examine the history of the race, that there is a God of pity, who organized such beings, and gave them such constituent faculties. We are prepared to believe that the analogy of this line of development continues, and that in angels it is as much superior to what it is in the highest men, as in the highest men it is superior to what it is in the lowest. And we are prepared to believe that, above angels and all supernal beings, in God himself, it takes on a grandeur and dignity utterly inconceivable to men, and commensurate with the infiniteness of God's whole nature.

2. When we look at human society, we must go through a like process to that which we have now been going through. If we look at it as an organization, I think we shall find that it does not fitly serve as an analogue to the divine nature. We shall not read God's nature, and the nature of God's government aright, if we undertake to infer them from what we see in the administration of government among men. And yet, this is the most common mode of deriving our theories of moral government, as it is the most common method by which we undertake to ascertain and to frame the peculiar administration and nature of God. But I will show that it is an eminently faulty analogue. Civil and criminal law may be humane; but they cannot have pity, as such. It is an abstraction to speak of law. We scarcely can separate law from the administration of it by officers.

Laws then, cannot have sympathy with the culprit. Neither can magistrates, except as men; and the man breaks through into the magistrate perpetually. Magistrates may have sympathy; but in a purely official character they cannot. That is not what they were made magistrates for. It is contrary to the function which they were set to discharge. As a ruler, a man cannot have pity. *The soul that sinneth, it shall suffer—it shall die*, is just as true in abstract and absolute civil government, as it is in material nature. If there is any pity, it is limited, and must be regarded as a kind of interpolation. Government

was not meant for purposes of restoration. It was meant to be a restraining, guiding, penal institution. It does not undertake to exercise all moral attributes and offices. It would be impossible for it to do it. You may say that a judge ought to be upright. You may say that a magistrate ought to be pure. You may say that all rulers ought to be pitying and kind. And as men they ought to be, and may be, and often are. But looking at their abstract design, standing as the representatives of law and government, we see that kindness and pity are no part of the function that they were expected to assume or exercise.

Human society itself is a rude and clumsy organization of human forces. Men cannot stop the progress of business, men cannot suspend rules, men cannot make exceptions every day, in order to take care of the weak. The business of human society is like a treadmill. It does not go by the volition of the men that are on it, but by machinery: and men must step on, or be dragged round and round. Organized business is obliged to hold on in its steady course, and more or less disregard the weak and the suffering. It cannot undertake to play an eleemosynary part. If it were to undertake to do what an individual could do, more harm than good would come of it. The vast complicated factory cannot stop all its functions to relieve one that is suffering, without throwing fifty others into suffering.

And this is not because society is so perfect, but because it is so weak. It is because human organizations, whether of government or business, are but expedients, and very clumsy expedients. As compared with barbarity, organizations are admirable; but as compared with a perfect government, they are extremely rude. Organized business is a thing of law; and law is always hard and unrelenting.

3. Above all other places, it is in the family and in the individual heart that we find the full disclosure of pity, or a state of sympathy and helpfulness in view of another's suffering. There pity may expand and have free course. If, then, one would gain the clearest ideas of the scope and nature of pity, he must study it in the family. Parents of large-mindedness and great goodness; parents that are just and benevolent — they are the ones that we must study; not loose, silly, over-indulgent parents; not those that love their children in such a way as to spoil them, but persons of discretion, of moral ideas, of magnitude, and firmness; persons that have an intense sense of right and wrong, honor and dishonor, goodness and evil; persons that love their children so that they desire to bring them up into real moral strength. They are the ones that we must study if we wish to come to a true idea of the nature of pity.

What, then, do we see in looking at such men? We see that love inflicts pain. There is not a father that is fit to be called *father*, who

does not sometimes punish his child because he loves him. There is not a mother so tender that she does not sometimes give her child intentional pain. Strange would that child be that never required it. Children are perpetually throwing themselves, by reason of their ignorance, upon wrong ways; and if they are well organized they will have the unregulated principle of firmness and tenacity of will; and that must go through drill and education. The child does not know any better; and that is the way it is to be taught better. All our earlier teaching goes through the basilar faculties. It is fear—nay lower than fear, it is sentient suffering—that infuses our very earliest ideas, and precedes all ideas. Beginning at the lowest point, we have to work our way gradually up through the social and spiritual elements. And every wise, just, pure, high-minded, noble, loving father or mother punishes the child. I do not say that parents necessarily take the "rod;" but there is a rod in *no*. There is a rod in a frown. The parent inflicts pain upon the child in order to drill it; in order to keep it from sin; in order to develop it into true manliness. And it is because parents love, that they let the child suffer, measuring the suffering, grading it, holding it back to just the proper proportions, that it may not over-reach the end it has in view.

We see, also, that where suffering is inflicted by a wise and loving parent, the object of it is not to avenge a wrong done to the parent. The object of suffering is two-fold—to bring a motive to bear upon the child which shall recover it, and also to save the other children from being brought into the same predicament of mischief. Both are objects of love. When a child has gone wrong, if a parent is angry let him stand off. Never punish a child when you are angry. "Well," you say, "when I am good-natured I cannot." All the worse for you and the child. No justice in this world is worthy of the name of justice that has not a heart of pity. There is no right in any human being to inflict pain to satisfy a revengeful impulse. That is beastly. No true parent inflicts pain upon a child except because he feels that that is the best gift he can confer upon that child, and because, incidentally, it is a benefit conferred upon every other child—for sometimes one whipping in a family is vicarious, and saves a multitude of strokes. The point is, that when parents love their children, they inflict pain upon them, not for the sake of avenging themselves for some personal slight or affront, but for the sake of the children's good, and the good of the children's brothers and sisters.

We see, also, that pity in the family of a wise, upright, large-minded man, is consistent with penalty. The parent is sorry for the child that he is punishing; and just so soon as the punishment has checked the evil in the child, the parent helps to cure the very suffering

which he himself has caused. He and the child are not enemies because they are at the two ends of the whip. The whip is held by the heart at one end, and it is meant to reach the heart at the other end — though it does it by devious ways. In the administration of pain in the family, love administers it; and it is for the purposes of love that it is administered. And when it has wrought its end, love cures it. So that from beginning to end it is love-work, as we see it in the ripest and best natures on earth.

In our endeavors to interpret God, we should remember that the Bible draws from three great sources. When it attempts to set God before our minds, it draws the illustrations of divine power, or the natural attributes of God, from nature. Storms, fire, floods, the seasons, mountains, the various material forces — these are all marshalled around about the name of God, to illustrate his natural attributes. And they can go no further than that.

When God's administration over the race and nations is taught in the Bible, the figures are drawn from human institutions in society. Rude and imperfect as they are, they do convey to us the idea that God is a being who is governing for all time multitudes, by general principles, and that there is in the administration of general principles certain elements that make it impossible for God to do some things that might be done if there were but a single being in the universe. But this is as far as we ought to follow civil institutions as analogues.

The third great source from which the Bible draws its illustrations and figures is the family — and this is the main source. If you will take the trouble to read through the Old and the New Testaments, and take all the cases in which God is called "Father," and in which men are called "sons;" if you will take all the illustrations of marriage and parentage; if you will take all the household illustrations; if you will take all the titles that are given to God, you will see in what an immense disproportion God has been represented to us in the Bible, not by nature, not by civil governments, but by the domestic relations of men in the family. The Church is God's household; and the prayer that we learned to lisp with our earliest days; the prayer that as a blessing has hung over the world for two thousand years, and that still, morning and night, is breathed by myriad infant lips — "Our Father which art in heaven" — interprets the nature of God from the side of the family.

Only in the highest form of the life of the family can we approximate to the liberty which there is in love; to the compassion which there is in justice: to God's sorrow for suffering, which nevertheless he permits. You find that whatever you see in the administration of divine providence by way of infliction, or permission, or remedy for suffering, in this world, answers to something that you have seen in

the voluntary administration of the family trust by parents that you know to be wise, just, pure, and good. Anything that conflicts with that may safely be set aside as the fiction of man, and not as the revelation of the Word of God.

In view of these statements, I remark

First. Pity on the part of God will not prevent the infliction of penalty among transgressors. It does not do it among ourselves. It ought not to do it among ourselves. We did not need to be taught that God would punish. All nature has been teaching us that. Penalty is the thing with which men have been most familiar in this world. Groans, tears, suffering, sickness, sorrow, death, wars, pestilences, all the agencies of the heavens, and all the powers of the earth, have been up and doing; and we did not need to have it told us that there was penalty for violated law. There is not a bone that does not call out that. There is not a nerve nor muscle that does not show that. There is not a single sin in human history that does not teach that. What we need to have taught us is that suffering is not brutal; that it is not unregulated; that it is for a moral end. Above all, we need to have it taught us that God, who permits and inflicts the suffering, does not hate; is not cruel; is not infernal; is not devilish. We need to be taught that it is possible for a Being to permit suffering in a globe like this, and yet be an eminent Lover. It is this teaching that we need, and it is this that we have got in the revelation of Christ in the New Testament. It is the disclosure that in the midst of all these terrific scenes in the history of the world, there is a purpose of love running through them from beginning to end; that there is a remedial nature given to them; that they are characterized, not by vengence, but by love. Listen:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

A doom was on the city; and yet, the Saviour wept over it, and lamented as a mother laments over her first-born child. God permits suffering in this world, he inflicts it; and yet, he is a God of infinite love and mercy.

Secondly. Those who are suffering the just consequences of their sins are not on that account excluded from God's pity. When God punishes, he does not feel about punishment as we do. We bring our brutal feelings to bear to drive home punishment. God punishes with great compassion and pity while he punishes, and with great mercy in store for us, if only we knew how to avail ourselves of it. We must take pain here.

The remedial importance of this truth, and the perversion of our ideas respecting it, demand that we should consider a little more in detail the matter that while God inflicts suffering in cleansing men from their sins, they are not on that account excluded from his pity.

Consider how impossible it is to infer anything from the lower creation of the feelings of God. Consider the way in which society treats criminals. Consider the way in which individual men treat those who have offended against them. I know not that there remains in society a work of barbarism greater than the feeling which we all have—which you have, which I have, which everybody has who has not been trained out of it—toward criminals. Where men have committed thefts, robberies, crimes, great violations; where men have by their wrong conduct inflicted suffering on others, the moment it is understood, the whole community rise up like a kennel of wild beasts. It may be said that this is an unregulated impulse of justice; but the moment a crime is fastened on a man, there comes a revolution in our thoughts and feelings toward him, and we do not regard him as belonging to the human race any more. We do not believe that we are related to him by the least duty of humanity. We do not think it is a sin to feel toward him as we do not feel toward any other human creature. And when his crime has been proved, and sentence has been passed upon him, how nobody cares because he is disgraced! How few there are that would ever shed a tear because so noble a nature as every human being has in him has been disfigured, soiled, and prostituted to cruelty and wrong! How men feel, "Served him right;" "Glad of it;" "Wish the penalty had been a hundred times as great!" Not only does he lose his civil rights, but he hardly retains so much as human rights, in the loose and careless language of common men.

Look at the jails in which we put criminals. Sometimes they are fit for beasts to live in, but mostly not. Our jails, taking the country through, are a disgrace to a civilized world and a civilized community. In their barrenness, they are scarcely less than instruments by which nature is allowed to torture men for their crimes. When I go back in history to see what justice has taken upon itself to do; when I think of the base trials, and cruel tortures in England, from whose loins we came, which hardly ceased within the memory of our fathers; when I think of the hideous imprisonments and unutterable wickednesses which have been committed by justice, I sometime think justice in this world, as it has been administered by fallable men, has been more heinous and more outrageous in the sight of God, than the crimes which it sought to punish. When the last-day books shall be opened, those will not be the worst books which shall show you the *bagnio* and the stew; those will not be the worst books that show you the pilferer's and the

robber's history: those will be the worst books that show you what Christian churches have done, and what organized civil justice has done; that show you the horrible tortures and cruelties that have been inflicted upon men. Heaven, in its very happiness, will stand aghast at the reflection and revelation of such gigantic cruelties committed by man upon man.

And although we have purged the organizations of civil society from such overt cruelties, yet hear how men talk when the community is roused up about a man. See how utterly devoid they are of humanity and pity. So intense are men in expressing their horror and indignation, that they turn remorsely against their fellow-men. As wounded wolves are said to be turned upon by the rest of the flock, and torn to pieces, so men that have done wrong are turned upon, and cast down, and rent and torn, by the rest of the community. If you want to know what hell is, go and hear men talk of fresh crime and fresh criminals.

Here and there men are to be found that feel sorrow and pity, but they are regarded as men of no souls. "Do you not care for the community?" say men. "Do you not care for law and integrity? What kind of a man are you, to plead for a man on whom society has justly put its branding-iron?" And when men see the red hot branding-iron put upon the brow of a criminal, and hear the flesh crackle, they think it is sweet incense before God, and that justice is appeased.

When a man comes out of prison, where, it may be, he has been justly confined, do men turn to him like a brother to a brother? Let a brother go wrong in his youthful days, and have you not a brother's heart? Let him come back, after some years of experience in vice, weak, worn out, dilapidated, and say to you, "Oh! my brother, I have been all wrong; I have suffered much, and I have learned much: give me a chance; give me a shelter; give me bread; give me sympathy, that I may save the last of my life, having wildly thrown away the beginning," and would you not have a brother's heart? Would you not say, "Oh! brother, all that I have is thine. My purity shall be your shelter; my reputation shall be your shield; and my house shall be your castle. Only come back to me as you were when you and I were boys together, and whatever is mine shall be yours?" But do we take men back from jail in such a spirit as that? What if they are not reformed? I do not think jails and state prisons are apt to reform anybody —certainly not while such monstrous outrages continue, as when these places of punishment are put up at auction and sold for political favor, and when all sorts of men are for commercial purposes set to control them. Men are treated by their fellow men, not for reformatory purposes, but for social and commercial thrift, or some political emolument. And is the administration of such a system in the community likely to

reform men? When I see the disparity there is between sentences, when I see how a man in one county, for stealing a horse, is sentenced for five years, and another man, in another county, for a crime ten times more hideous, is sentenced for only two years, when I see one man sent up for ten years, and another for five, for the same thing; when I see that party politics can clear a man in one county, and condemn a man in another county; when I think of the feelings that men carry with them in prisons, and of the effects of their treatment, I cannot see much chance for them to reform. Anything but a prison for reformation, it seems to me, in this world.

And yet, when men come out of prisons, how does society turn away from them, and say, "Eh! jail-bird; I don't want him."

Such a man once told me his story. He had unconsciously, by the exigencies of his life, been drawn into the circulation of counterfeit money. By the way, there is a great deal of that done by men who do not make a business of it. I do not wish to be personal! For a man to buy counterfeit money on purpose to circulate it is a criminal offence; but if a man in regular business finds that ten dollars have been passed on him, what does he say, to-morrow, when you ask him, "Where is that ten dollars," but this: "I guess I let it slide?" Now, in law and in morals that man is a counterfeiter, though men do not think so.

This man had served out his time, behaving so well as to gain the approbation of every officer in the prison; and he came back to New York. He did not attempt to hide his history. He was willing to do anything. He had commercial talent and tact. He gave me a history of his reception from store to store by his old associates. Everybody felt as though he had a lothesome disease upon him. Everybody suspected him. Nobody was willing to trust him. After he had tried a year to find something to do, discouraged and well-nigh heart-broken as he was, the strongest temptations were held out to him by his old confederates to go into a life of dishonesty. They would show him friendliness. And he said to me, "I receive sympathy, Mr. Beecher, from none but the worst folks. I receive nothing but unkindness and suspicion from the best folks. What am I going to do?"

Oh, men! are you Christians? Is the heart of a Christian community so utterly barren of sympathy and pity that after a man has done wrong, and suffered the penalty of it, and wants to do right, he might starve in your streets, and die, and the stones be as piteous as your hearts are toward him? And are you followers of God, who *pitieth those that fear him, like as a father pitieth his children?*

Consider how men talk about wicked men when once they are down, and are suffering. You need not go far to hear it. It is in your ears almost every day, upon one or another occasion. A man that has

been doing wrong, has been convicted. "I am glad of it," says one. "But," says another, "his whole family will suffer." "They ought to suffer." "But he was neglected and over-tempted." Ah! none of your mawkish charity. It is all a mush of magnanimity, this talking about wicked men in such a way. It is a sacrifice of justice.' Says another man, "I would like to pull the halter." "He has made pain enough in this world," says another. "Now let him taste a little of his own drink," says another. Another says, "He has spilled blood; and every drop in his veins, if it had a separate life, ought to be killed." "Let him sup horror to his fill," says another.

Now, I do not say that the man ought not to be punished; but I do say, that all those feelings are expressions of the wild beast that is in you, and not of the divinity. You have no business to have any such avenging feelings. They may be excused in the first tumult of detection, or in the wild struggle of arrest; but the moment the criminal is safely handed over to justice, no man has a right to pursue him with an avenging feeling, or with the love of cruelty. That is ungodly—certainly unchristlike.

That there is a certain interest which men ought to feel in the arrest and punishment of evil doers, I affirm; but I also declare that it is very liable to degenerate into a most dangerous feeling. No man has a right to give loose to his own personal malign passions, and then call it *conscience* or *justice*.

Why, suppose God should treat us as we treat men in this respect, what would become of any one of us? If he were strict to mark, if he were strict to judge, if he were strict to condemn and to punish, who of us could stand for one single moment? We are the very men that are set forth in the parable, where the debtor goes to his prince, and says, "Have compassion on me: I have nothing; but wait, and I will pay thee all." He had compassion on him; and he went out and found a fellow-servant who owed him; and he took him by the neck, and said, "Pay me what thou owest." And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and said, "Have compassion on me, wait, and I will pay thee all." And he would not, but hauled him to prison. And when the lord of that servant heard what he had done, he called him and said, "Shouldst thou not have had compassion on thy fellow servant, since I had compassion on thee? By as much as you have been unfeeling and cruel to him, you shall bear cruelty and punishment yourself."

Are we not doing the same thing? Are we not described in this parable? Are we not sinners every one of us. And are there not dangerous pitfalls that any of us may plunge into at an unguarded moment? You may not be liable, perhaps, to temptations of violence;

but then, you may be liable to temptations of avarice. You may not be liable to temptations of dishonesty; but, you may be liable to temptations of social hilarity. You may not be liable to burn down your neighbor's house, but you may be liable to drunkenness, some of you. Some of you may not be liable to drunkenness, but you may be liable to lewdness. Some of you may not be tempted by any of the passions, but you may be tempted by that hard-hearted selfishness which makes the heart like the desert of Sahara—sand, sand, sand, without a green thing in it? Who is there that can rise up before God and say, "I have a right to condemn, for I have never sinned"? When God says, I have found a ransom for sinners, who shall turn himself with bitter and vindictive fury upon transgressors?

Thirdly. All men who are striving to live aright in this world, although they are far from successful, may be comforted in the thought that there are more who sympathize with them than they know or dream. God is on their side. There are a great many that have gone wrong, who feel an earnest desire to go right again. They would undertake it if they thought they could succeed; but it seems to them as though everything was against them. No, God is not against you. I believe that a simple childlike trust in God will go further to save a man who has stumbled, and bring him back, and make him a man, than all the sympathy and succor that the world can give. Oh! that I could infix that inward faith in men. Oh! that I could make men who have been wicked feel that God will not cast them off, that he is sorry for them, and that while he punishes them, it is for their good, and not for their destruction. Oh! that I could make men see God as I see him.

Take the reformation of the prodigal son. The young man went out from his father's house, and spent his substance in riotous living, and came, by his own fault, to the utmost degradation; and during all these years of his absence, there was not an hour in which he was absent from his father's heart. And when, by his misery, and not by his filial love, he was impelled to come back; when actuated by the lowest motives, and not by the highest, he said, "I will go home, and confess my wrong, and may be my father will let me work for him, instead of working here among swine, and for a foreigner; and when he had started, and was yet afar off, his father saw him. Oh, a father's or a mother's eye can see further than any telescope that ever art invented. Years had changed him. Time had degraded him. In place of the young, fair-cheeked boy that went away, here was a haggard, hollow eyed, ragged, feeble, way-worn, dust-covered man. He was slouchingly drawing near to his father's house. And yet, though he was afar off, the father knew him. And he ran to meet him—as God runs a great way to meet every man that has done wrong, and wants to get

back to right. And when the son, humble and penitent, began to make his plea, and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son," the father did not let him finish it. He threw his arms about him. He forgave and loved him. Before he could ask to be taken back, he took him back. And he royally clothed him, and put sandals on his feet, and rings on his hand.

But that is not the whole story. The elder brother was one of those men who never went wrong. He was one of those men who never had appetites or passions, and who never stumbled. And when he found that his younger brother had got back, he did not, old pharisee of a brother as he was, think a word of his younger brother's being recovered from damnation. He did not care that his heart was going to have another chance. Nothing of that sort. But he said, in a rebuking way to his father, "All these years have I served you, and you never gave me a kid. You never did anything for me. But now that this worthless vagabond has got home, the fatted calf must be killed for him, and the ring must be put on his hand!"

Whenever a poor storm-driven soul tries to get back, there are just such men in every community, who stand and say, "I thank God that I never sinned so." And if any sympathy is shown toward the unfortunate one, they say, "This is just the way to make crime easy."

Oh soul! remember your Father in heaven. Remember that God who does not feel as man feels. And that you may believe he does not, let me read his words:

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Oh, royal abundance!

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

This is said to show what mercy God will have on men when they will only break away from their sins, and turn, and come to him. There is no such port on the whole coast. And yet, the heart of God is just that open port which any sinner may run into, day or night, without a pilot, and make sure anchorage.

If you have neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister; if you are outcast, you have a God; and a God that, however wicked you have been, says he will forgive? Oh no, that is not the way. When a poor man gives, he gives according to what he has. To give a few pence is a great thing for a poor man. But his neighbor, who is better off, says, "I will give a dollar." And according to what he has, that is very well. But a man over the way says, "I am better able

than they, and I am going to give twenty-five dollars." It is heard of down the street where men are making money pretty easy and pretty fast, and one says, "I will give a hundred dollars." Another says, "I will give five hundred." And another—a great hearted, generous man—says, "I will put down a hundred thousand."

People, talking about these men, say, "They are giving, not only according to their means, but according to their dispositions."

Now, when a man has been injured, and you are the man that has injured him, and you ask his forgiveness, and promise him, and placate him, by-and-by he says, "I did mean to have my revenge out of you; but as you acknowledge your fault, I will just let you go; but I want you to understand that I do not want to have anything more to do with you. I will *forgive* it, but I cannot *forget* it." That is one way of forgiving.

Another man, a little higher up has been sinned against; and the offender comes to him and asks to be forgiven; and he says, "It is lucky for you that you found me in a good-natured hour. I will forgive you; but I do not want to say any more about it. Go, poor devil, and don't trouble me again." That is a little better; but it is not altogether courteous.

Another man has been wronged; and when the offender comes to ask forgiveness of him, he says, "I have no personal feelings against you. I think you did me a great wrong; and yet, the only thing that hinders me from forgiving you, is the idea of what the effect of doing it too easily will have upon the community and the government and the law." On the whole, being in a metaphysical state of benevolence, he concludes that he will forgive the man. And that case involves some higher faculties than any of the rest.

Then there is another case. Here is a great hearted, kind man. A criminal comes to him, and says, "I am here to confess that I have done wrong, and to beg that you will not be hard with me, but will forgive me." And the man says, "Oh, my dear fellow, come here. God be thanked that you had the courage to come. Forgive you? Why yes, of course I will. What can I do for you? Is there not something? I am so glad that you have come back. I was sorry that you did so foolish a thing; but it is all over now. Come and see me again. And do not be drawn away again. Forgive you? My good fellow, I love you better than ever. And let me help you."

Is there not a difference between that man's forgiveness, and the forgiveness of these other men? As a butler gets a cork out of a bottle, so men forgive, oftentimes.

Now if a man forgives, and has mercy, what does God mean when he says he will "abundantly pardon?" Remember that it is God who

speaks, infinite in power, infinite in mercy, infinite in love, infinite in empire and in being. What is "abundance" in such an one as that? And when God says that if a man will come back, and forsake his evil thoughts and his wicked ways, he will forgive him, and "abundantly" have mercy on him, what does he mean? What is God's abundance? Who can tell what that clearance, that utter wiping out of sin, is, which God promises?

There is no such lover as God. There is no such magnanimity as there is in God's nature. There is no such friend as God. There is no such harbor or refuge as his bosom. And if you have done wrong, go to your earthly friend if you will; but go to God by all means. He is loving, he is gentle, he is full of pity, and he says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are but dust." "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldy unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Almighty God, thou hast taught us to call thee by the name of Father. Thou hast inspired in our hearts that affection which children feel for their parents. And the more we learn the things that are right, to love them, and that are true, to believe them, and that are lovely, to rejoice in them, the more easily do we rise to thee; the more clear and comforting is the conception which we have of thy nature; the more are we able to enter into thy presence by sympathy. And our treasure is not the things which our hands have built and not the things which we have gathered around about us of comfort, but our God. We glory in thee; in thy nature; in thy disposition; in the administration of thy government; in all thy thought and mercy toward us; in thy love, supereminent over every other attribute. We rejoice in thee; and in this joy there is no decline. Nothing can rob us of thee. Who shall pluck us out of thine hand? Who shall separate between us and thee? What power is there that is like thine? And in thee what power is there that is like love? And if when we were enemies thou didst love us, how much more now that we are friends? And if whilst yet we were alienated from thee thou didst give thine only begotten Son, and he freely gave his life a ransom for us, shall he not also, with it, freely give us everything that we need for living again? What though our sins do rise up before us, are they so great as thy mercies are? What though we remember the open door of temptation through which our adversaries full often have run, are they mightier than thou art? Is there in all the universe the evil that is so strong as the Spirit of God? Is there a providence of mischief that can measure itself against thy providence of mercy which thou art administering? Cleanse our understandings of servile fear; but fill them with filial fear. May we reverence thee, and draw near with humble boldness. May we have that familiarity which affection begets in the soul. And while we know thy greatness and tremble at thy purity, give us the access of children, that we may come up to thy very feet, and look up into thy face, and plead thy love as the reason of our confidence and our hope. For, if thou still dost love us, thou dost pity us. All our temptations, and all our downfalls, and all our difficulties, and all our darkness shall at last fly away, and we shall have victory, in that blessed land where there shall be no more struggle, and no more trial, and no more sorrow nor crying, forevermore.

Grant, we beseech of thee, this morning, to every one in thy presence, this sense of God with him. Speak unto every troubled soul the words of peace. Draw near and sanctify to each one the dispensations of thy providence. Thou art dealing with every one according to thine own wisdom; but with all for their good. To some there is given largeness of mercies and happiness; to some thou art giving darkness and bitter pains; some thou art chastising; some thou art caressing; thy face is hid from some; thy face shines out upon others; and all of them are dealt with in love. So do we deal with our children. Bring home to us the preciousness of the conviction that thou art a Father dealing with us in love and in mercy, even when we are in darkness, in pain and in tribulation. While we are tossing in the night upon the sea, and crying out for fear, oh speak, and say to every one, "It is I; be not afraid." Come upon the troubled sea, come through our darkness, O thou Saviour, to help our souls, and to help us in this mortal life, seeking to save our souls. And grant that every one who is burdened this morning, and every one who is cast down by sorrow, and every one who is in doubt and perplexity, and all that are remorseful, may look up and behold thee very near to them, a present help in time of trouble.

Vouchsafe, we beseech of thee, thy mercies to all those who are gathered in our thoughts, and who belong to us—the absent members of our families; all that are in sickness; all that watch by sick beds; all that are in trouble and weariness; those that in thy providence are removed from us on various errands. Spread abroad thy hands this day, and speak peace to our beloved. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless not only ours, but all who lie around about us, and who are blood of our blood, and flesh of our flesh—the erring, the sin-sick, the outcast, the despised and the rejected. We pray that

we may have mercy given to us; and as thou didst bow down thy heavens for the most despised and the worst, so may we still keep a heart of love and mercy for the despised and the outcast.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing, to-day, upon all thy Churche Purify them in word, in doctrine, in administration. Grant that all who seek thee sincerely, with whatever error of understanding, may still have some portion of thy beams falling upon them, and that they may have some fruit of the summer of thy love in their souls. And may those who are preaching to-day throughout our land, everywhere, have thee on their side. Hear those ignorant men who are trying to preach to the ignorant. Let the little light which they have shine in the souls that are darkened, that they may know of the redemption of Jesus Christ. Be with those that try to teach the scattered and the outcast, gathering them together in Sabbath schools, to-day; and may they do their Master's work, in their Master's spirit. We beseech of thee that thou wilt be with those who are in far distant states and territories, in sickness, in weakness, in poverty, in neglect, unhelped and ensuccored. Still may they be able to endure for Christ's sake, and with invincible faith carry the tidings of the cross to every living creature.

We pray for all our schools and colleges and seminaries of learning. We pray that they may be sanctified and purified, and that intelligence may go forth throughout all our land.

And that this great people may be virtuous, not only lift them up in outward strength, but give them yet more mightily that spirit of strength which shall make them more just, more moderate, more true. And may this nation serve thee, and serve their fellow men, that all the earth may see thy salvation. Hasten that blessed day. These eyes shall not see it here; but grant that we may see it from above, in clearer lines, in brighter light, and in sweeter effulgence.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless us in the word of truth. Comfort and cheer us by it. Oh! the dark abyss of ignorance! Oh! the swirling malignity of human passions! Oh! the hell that is upon earth! Who shall deliver from the cruelty of men? Who shall deliver from the wickedness of our own cruelties and hard-heartedness? Thou art God. Thou sittest in the sweet love of heaven, and art all the time purifying the earth. As winds sweeping through cities and towns drive off the foul vapors which human bodies have generated; so thy great love is sweeping through the earth and cleansing it from the cruelties and malignities of the human heart; blessed be thy name, thou Sovereign of all recovering love! Oh Jesus! sanctify us. Make us a little like thee. Make us sweeter than men are in their best estate of nature, that we may represent thy tenderness and gentleness and mercy.

Have compassion, we beseech of thee, on the poor, the outcast, the unfriended, the imprisoned, the condemned. Deliver them from the cruelty of men's hands, and from the freezing coldness of men's thoughts. Grant that we may know how to temper justice with humanity and mercy, and that we may know how to raise the fallen, cheer the faint, forgive the sinful, and live so that at last—at *last*—when our mistakes are done, and our sins are passed, we may hear thee say, with open arms, *Come—welcome.*

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

"Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speakest against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."—MATT. xii. 31, 32.

There is very much anxiety and very little knowledge on this important subject. After a hopeless essay at understanding it, many persons give it up in confusion, and do not try to understand it. They think it is mysterious. It is neither mysterious nor obscure, in its true and inward meaning; that is, when the truth has once been brought out, it will be found to be a truth which belongs to the teaching of the whole Scripture, from beginning to end. It seems, at first sight, as if there were a general declaration that all sin, and all ordinary blasphemy, was to be forgiven, even when it was applied to the Son of God; but that there was a peculiar reason of sacredness why, in regard to the third person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit—blasphemy was unforgivable: as if it assumed in that direction a malignancy of guiltiness: or, as if there were some prominent glory in the Holy Spirit which made it more culpable. Either of these ways of looking at it aggravates the difficulty, increases the number of questions to be asked, and carries us further from any true ground of solution.

The particular occasion on which this discourse was uttered, will show us the clue to its explanation. The twelfth chapter of Matthew gives in detail the account of what might be called our Master's conflict with his enemies—a conflict waged, not by controversy, but by his beneficent miracles. For instance, there was the controversy as to whether it was lawful for him to show mercy on the Sabbath day by healing; or, in other words, whether it was right for him to use the Sabbath day rationally, and for men's benefit, instead of using it as a yoke and a shackle.

Then came up the controversy about the man with the withered hand; and Jesus healed him on the spot. Every man who has a manly heart, whenever he sees any course that does real good to his fellow men, if he be rational, if he be just, if he be wholesome, will acknowl-

SUNDAY MORNING, Dec. 19, 1869. LESSON: Isa. v. 1—25. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 639, 755, 690.

edge at least the mercy and kindness; but the Pharisees, when they saw Christ heal this man, overthrowing them on every ground, were totally insensible to the kindness and mercy. They "went out and held a counsel against him, how they might destroy him," and "Jesus knew it," and "withdrew himself."

He was, in a second instance, brought into the presence of "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw; and all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city, or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?"—and more to the same point. And then it is that he says, "Wherefore, I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men."

The facts in these cases cannot be evaded. Here were God's works manifested both by the power required, and by its beneficence. These Scribes and Pharisees looked upon the disclosure without the slightest sympathy either with its mercy or with its divinity. They coolly said, "It is Beelzebub that helps him."

If that speech had been a passionate parry in a fierce debate, it would have been pardonable; but it indicated a deliberate state of mind, a degree of moral corruption, which turned things entirely about. It indicated that they had arrived at such a state of incurable perversion that when they looked upon moral goodness in a concrete form, illumined by the divine Spirit, they called it evil. They were hopeless. Their moral sense had become thoroughly disorganized, degraded, perverted, past cure.

With these facts before us, we begin to have an insight into what this passage means.

If the faculty or organ by which a man discerns good and evil has become so perverted that it fails in its proper uses; if a man's moral faculties are so perverted that the Holy Spirit, who is the source of inspiration, and who gives forth that light and stimulus by which the moral sense acts, is set aside and contemned; then that man's constitution is so corrupted that his moral judgment may be said to be gone. If under circumstances which bring upon a man's soul the full power of the Holy Spirit, cleansing the understanding, and giving life to the conscience, he resolutely and deliberately reviles God's truth and goodness, it is a fatal symptom. There can be no reaction

from such a condition. He has gone so far that, as a mere matter of fact, his case will assuredly prove fatal.

While this particular mode of presenting the truth makes this doctrine seem new and special, the real thing which the Lord aimed at is over and over again set forth in the Scriptures both of the Old Testament and of the New. It is, in short, the danger of a perversion of the moral sense, by which good shall become evil, and evil shall become good. In the passage which I read in the opening service this morning, from the 5th chapter of Isaiah, at the 20th verse, it is said, "Woe unto them that call evil good"—think it is so—"and good evil"—hate it as a great many men do; "that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

This is precisely the same spirit of moral perversion by which the qualities of things are changed, and that which is base and undermining and soul-destroying is thought to be, and is pronounced to be, good; by which vices are justified, and called virtuous, and natural, and right; by which virtues are degraded, and called puritanic, and stigmatized by every name of reproach. Woe unto those that turn things end for end, so that that which ought to be dark, and is dark, shall be praised as light and beautiful and glorious!

"He that saith unto the wicked," declares inspiration in another place, "Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse. Nations shall abhor him."

"This," saith the Master, "is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light."

Again he saith, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

If that judgment, that moral sense, by which you are to discern between good and evil, which is to be the eye of the soul, and guide it, is so perverted that the very light that is lit in your bosom becomes dark, how profound is that darkness! It is night without a morning.

The apostle Paul, in Romans, says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind."

This phraseology is more exactly in accordance with the psychological facts as they actually occur. As they did not like to retain God, in his enlightening, restraining, purifying influences, he let them alone, and "gave them over" to this perverted, "reprobate mind."

These are but single specimens, such as abound all the way through the Scripture. This very perversion of a man's inward moral sense, under circumstances in which it is stimulated and developed by the power of the Holy Spirit; this perversion of a man's moral sense under circumstances which shut him off from true beneficence, from

purity, from nobility, and ally him to things which are base and wicked, is one of the most dangerous, and, as I think it will appear in the sequel, one of the most common, of the tendencies which set in upon a man.

This comprehensive sin, then, which, as I shall show more in detail, is not a single act, but a state of mind, involves a real perversion of the ground and root of the moral nature in man, a perversion of the great facts in human conduct of good and evil, and the necessity of revolting from, and blaspheming, that divine Spirit — the Holy Ghost — which gives to the soul its light and its stimulus. When completed, this state sets a man at variance with his own nature, with the truths of a virtuous life, and with God, the author of spirit-life. And so, Christ declares that he who speaks against the Son — that is, the Son of his humiliation, walking as a man among men — opposing him hastily, blindly, may be forgiven; but that no man can oppose the Holy Ghost, that shines upon his own moral consciousness, thus deliberately going against his own inward moral convictions, and be forgiven. No man will who is recoverable. No man will until he has gone so far down that he is given over, it may be, to a "reprobate mind."

From this explanation we are prepared to go on with some more definite points.

1. This is not a sin which one can commit by accident, and without knowing it. I say this as an alleviation to multitudes of persons who are in great distress and torment. They are afraid they have committed the *unpardonable sin.* When, or how, they do not know. It is a vague impression in their mind, that there is some such sin; and they seem to think it is a special act. A man says, "It might have been some moment of outrageous anger, when I blasphemed everything above and below, that I committed the unpardonable sin." No, the unpardonable sin is not a single act, but a comprehensive state of mind. That is, a sin which applies to the whole condition to which a man has brought himself by repeated perversions, and in which you may say his moral condition is broken down.

No man ever becomes dissipated at once. No man, no matter what his experience may be, can become utterly dissipated in a week — and still less in a day or an hour. But a man can, by days, and weeks, and months, and years, become so dissipated as to have broken down his whole bodily constitution; as to have sapped and sucked dry the brain; as to have impaired every nerve; as to have overstrained every organ. Every part of a man's body may be utterly destroyed by dissipation.

Now, there is a dissipation of the soul which corresponds to the dissipation of the body. It comes on by the perversion of a man's reason; by the perversion of his moral sympathies; by the perversion of his choices; by the perversion of his judgment in respect to things

right and wrong. It is a gradually accumulating process. It is not a single act. It is the comprehensive result of a long series of various acts.

No man, then, need fear that he will stumble by accident into blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, in the sense in which the Saviour used the phrase. No man can come to it without a thousand warnings. No man can come to it without long-continued perversions in most familiar and easily recognized instances.

It is possible that a man may consummate this sin at a given point of time. It is possible that a man may, in a moment of high temptation, bring to its consummation a long course of moral degradation and perversion. There may be a time when, with outrageous and blasphemous anger, a man is "given over." But this is simply the closing of a long series of wickednesses. Ordinarily, we are not to suppose that this work of deterioration ever has its consummation in any single act.

2. No man need fear that he has committed the unpardonable sin who is deeply alarmed and anxious about it: for the very nature of that sin is moral insensibility. If a man has *sinned away his day of grace*, he is the last person in the world that is concerned about it. The sign that a man has so sinned is moral paralysis; and if one shows anxiety about his condition, that very anxiety indicates that he has not come to that state. I have known a great many persons, and have had scores of persons come to me, who, though their life was not marked with any other infirmities or sins than belong to men in common, were in great anxiety lest they had committed the unpardonable sin. Indeed, it is almost invariably the case in those types of insanity where what is called "religious melancholy" sets in, that the person thinks he has sinned away his day of grace, or committed the unpardonable sin, and is in great distress about it.

Old Dr. Champion, one of the predecessors of my father's pulpit in Litchfield, Conn., in the latter part of his ministry, thought he had sinned away the day of grace, and that he was going to hell; and he never showed himself so much a Christian as in the disposition which he manifested at that time. If it was God's will that he should go there, he was willing to go. He did not know what he should do in hell, till one day he solved the question satisfactorily in his own mind, and said, "I will open a prayer-meeting there!" He thought it would afford him some balm and consolation. I do not think that man ever got there. And yet, he was in a constant state of melancholy from the feeling that his day of grace had gone.

In respect to such cases, that you have probably met, and that I, in my particular vocation, am constantly meeting, let it be remembered that sensibility, anxiety, and a disposition to be better, are totally in-

consistent with the existence of the unpardonable sin, and that those persons that are given over to a reprobate mind, are persons who never care about it, or trouble themselves about it. Just as long as a man cares whether he goes to church, and whether he hears right preaching, and whether he is in a salvable state, or not, he has not gone through the whole course. He may be leading a life the tendency of which is to take out the tone and temper of his moral condition; but just as long as he has any kick-back in him; as long as he resists; as long as there is power in the truth to touch his nerve of sensibility, so long he is not of a reprobate mind. And where a person's whole nature is yet sensitive, and he walks in sorrow and sackcloth, it is preposterous, it is next to insanity, for him to suppose that he has committed the unpardonable sin. Every man commits many sins; we all of us sin perpetually; there is not a day in which we do not have occasion to ask God for pardon; but so long as our conscience is alive, we may be sure that we have not sinned away our day of grace.

3. Ordinary procrastination; ordinary irresolution; the putting aside of things right on account of the superior attraction of some worldly good—these things, although they are sinful and dangerous, are not the sins which our Saviour marked. There are many persons that commit sins by offending God, by grieving the Divine Spirit, who are not properly to be called blasphemers against the Holy Ghost, nor charged with having committed the unpardonable sin. For the state to which a man has come when these things are true respecting him, is such a perversion of his moral sense that good and bad have become interchanged therein. It is a perversion of his discerning faculty. It is that condition in which he thinks bad things are good, and that good things are bad. It is that condition which the conscience, as the eye, is in, when it sees double—when it sees distortedly—being organically changed.

4. Is this perversion frequent? Are men peculiarly liable to it? Is this sin one into which we are likely to fall? Men are not likely to fall into it suddenly—those at any rate, who are in Christian households, and are following Christian courses. It is not the special sin of persons who are walking in the ways of morality and virtue. But in a great city like this there are not a few who are specially in danger of just this sin,—namely, such a total perversion of the moral sense that they prefer lies to the truth, vice to virtue, and oppression to justice. They lose all accuracy of judgment. They lose all sense of the fitness of things. By their interest, by the influence of their companions, and by the long drill of their own mind, they are changed right about. No man that is just and true can meet them without feeling, at every point, that if they are right he is wrong, and that if they are wrong he

is right. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness. They call evil good, and good evil. They call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter. There are multitudes of such instances. We see them all around about us.

This perversion may be the result of physical dissipation, which sometimes not only corrupts the body, but works a shocking demoralization of every faculty of the soul. Such is not always the effect of physical dissipation; for I have known men who, though they had gone through every gradation of intemperance, and though they seemed very much perverted in mind, yet maintained their understanding with a tolerable degree of justice. They knew what was right, and admitted it; and they knew what was wrong, and confessed that. There are many shades of intemperance. There are kinds of intemperance which make men devils. There are kinds of intemperance which seem to be the destruction of the nervous system, and the physical system. And, though these kinds of intemperance degenerate, unquestionably, the mental and moral constitution, yet they do not produce this effect in any such eminent degree as it is produced in many cases. I have known men that were victims of intemperance, who still remained amiable and kind, and in a sense, very gentle; who had intervals, paroxysms, of conviction; and who, down to the end of their life, had moral stamina enough to strive against their bondage, and cry out, "When I would do good, evil is present with me."

I have also seen cases where everything went by the board; where everything that was fair and lovely was burned up; and where an absolute change was wrought, by which kindness became cruelty, and fineness became vulgarity, and the higher elements of the soul were overwhelmed by lava-like passions.

Where dissipation takes on these ruinous forms, unquestionably it will result in so degrading the mind, in so bringing it down, that the moral sense will become utterly perverted. There are not a few persons in the midst of vices—men that gamble, or men that live in debauchery—who have, far back inside of their being, shut and locked up, a little chapel, where they keep a conscience, and a memory of their childhood. There are sometimes very bad men in whom, if you could only steal into the chapel of their souls, and strike the bell there, you could rouse up a sensibility which would surprise their friends and them. But it is shut. It is kept locked up. Then there are other men whose dissipation seems to make a clean sweep, so that there is nothing left in them. It destroys the imagination; it destroys the affections; it destroys the whole moral sense. You may sound on every nerve, and along every chord, and there is no place left in them that has not been destroyed by dissipation.

Such persons *have* committed the unpardonable sin. That man has committed the unpardonable sin whose moral sense is so perverted that when he is brought into the presence of truth, and under the direct inshining of the Holy Ghost, there is nothing in him that responds to the truth, but something in him that acts against it. That perversion of a man's whole moral constitution which destroys the power of God over his soul is a sin against the Holy Ghost. And a great many men are in danger of falling into that terrible abyss. A great many men have gone into it who will never come out.

It is, however, by no means confined to this. There is a danger that overhangs moral men. Men determined to do wrong may gradually destroy in themselves all moral resistance; but there is many a man that does wrong, and knows it, who is not in so dangerous a condition as a man that does wrong, and does not believe that he does so. A man who sins with his eyes open, is a great deal more likely to find his way out of sin than the man who puts his eyes out in order to sin. A man that does wrong, and knows it is wrong; a man that says, "I know this is wrong, but I will do it;" a man who keeps his sense of God's law intact; a man who says, "I choose to ride over my conscience, but then, I *have* a conscience, and I do not intend to blur my eyes;" a man who says, "I am walking in wrong courses; but after all the ideal of right in me has not been destroyed"—such a man has resiliency left; and a time may come when temptation will remit, and when moral influences will augment; and then he may be saved. The vitality of his moral constitution, his sense of right and wrong, and his perception of God's authority and man's responsibility, which are preserved, are all of them what a physician would call the *stamina, the point of resiliency*, on which he may bound up again under favorable circumstances.

But to the man who goes along, and reasons about every step, and says, "What is there wrong in this?" and unbraids everything, and untwists it, and takes it to pieces—to him, finally, lying is not wrong. It is inexpedient, of course. "A man," he says, "should administer lying with prudence; but it is not wrong in itself." And of friendship he says, "You get along better with it; but then, it is a great deal better for a man not to be beholden to anybody; it is a great deal better for a man to be his own friend, and to cultivate just as much friendship among men as is profitable; but after all, it is all a vain show." So he disintegrates the ideal of generous friendship. Step by step he questions matters of fidelity, matters of taste, matters of eating and drinking. All forms of illicit pleasure, all courses of wickedness through which men go, dissipations of every name, he takes and throws into the alembic of a bad meditation, and dissolves them together, and at last says, "There is nothing in the world to keep me

from going this way, or that way, or the other way. I do not believe there is any God or any future. I shall be like the clod that the plow turns over. I shall rot on one side, and turn up, and grow on the other side. I do not believe in good or bad. I believe he is the best man who is like a needle which takes the longest thread through the smallest hole." Such a man is of a reprobate mind. Any man who puts out his inward sight so that he has not the power of forming moral judgments; any man who dissolves the substance of integrity in him; any man who destroys the very fiber and texture of that which make right and wrong in his mind — any such man is reprobate. There is nothing left in him to save. You cannot do anything with him. When God's grace shines full on a man, if there are landmarks in him — landmarks of early education; landmarks of affection; landmarks of conscience — if there are strong points in him that you can address the truth to, you may save him, though he has gone down never so deep. But when a man's corruption has destroyed the nature of his conscience, and obliterated in his mind all distinction between good and bad, or right and wrong, what is there that you can get hold of by which to change him?

Now, there are many persons whose wickedness is of that kind. Ah! that is not the wickedest man who is fullest of blood; who is most impetuous; whose quick temperament and vital constitution make everything sweet; who plunges headlong into this wickedness, and the next, and the next, and, because reflection is painful, will not reflect, but dashes on; who is open and bold in his wickedness. Men say of such an one, "Oh! what a shameless fellow he is! and how wicked he is!" But not less wicked, perhaps, are those who hoot and howl after him. Not less wicked are those *elegant* men, who think it is not *prudent* or *wise;* who laugh and leer, and say, "Fool! what did he do it for? He could have had all he wanted in the world; but then, he ought to have been *prudent.* Why, there is not a pleasure to be desired that I do not have; but I do not blow my trumpet. I take it clandestinely. If he would only practise a little more art, if he would only use a little more hypocrisy, he would have just as much, and it would be a great deal better for him. He will injure himself by going on in such a reckless way. He ought to be more quiet, and keep up appearances. The right way to live, is to eat, drink, and be merry, and get as much pleasure as you can, but to keep everything fair above board." Do not you see such men all through society — men of exquisite enamel, but rotten inside; men full of wise, cautionary maxims that touch the outside of life, but full of damnation in the heart; men filled with envies, and jealousies, and inordinate avarices, and selfishnesses most profound, and withering lusts, all of them carried nicely and snugly in life? They are reprobate. They have sinned against the Holy Ghost.

But even where men are not carried into that state by their lower nature — by their passions and appetites — they still may be carried into substantially the same state by another class of faculties. Where men, for instance, have subjected the whole truth of religion, and all its developments, to ridicule, to cynical observation, to sneering skepticism, until they have destroyed in themselves the very power of appreciating goodness, they have sinned against the Holy Ghost. I have the most profound sympathy for a man that is truly a doubter. The voice that cries out, "Oh! my God, where art Thou!" is the saddest voice in the world. If in the night you heard, from out of the woods on the edge of which you dwelt, the voice of one in trouble calling out in the stillness, would not you rise and go out after him, and succor him, and bring him into the road if he had lost it? And if there are any who are in trouble from having lost their faith, not wanting to be unbelievers, but longing to get on stronger ground, my whole heart's pity goes out for them. It was to seek and to save such that Jesus Christ was sent into the world; and he will surely rescue them if they are honest and true; if they follow the heart rather than the head; if they seek not philosophy, but life in the soul. But when skepticism is sneering; when it is malignant; when men make use of it to disbelieve everybody's goodness, and not to increase their conviction that they themselves ought to be good; when it undermines the faith of others; and when it would destroy the young with its blighting strokes of wit — then it is most cruel, and most awful.

To put the torch to a man's house is nothing; to burn up his household goods is but very little, even if he is poor without them; but to take away a man's faith, though it be erroneous, is to take away the most sacred thing that he can have. Do not take away from a man anything that he believes in, and that he leans on, till you can put in its place something that is better. To knock from under a man's feet that which he stands on, and to give him nothing else, is a wanton cruelty and wickedness which is hardly to be measured by any language. How many parents there are that sneer at their children's faith! How many old materialistic lawyers, how many skeptical doctors, how many men that have no faith in religion, there are, who, though they are good at heart, and have kind ways, use their tongue as a lancet, cutting right and left, and destroying men's beliefs, instead of pruning them to make them better! How many there are, the effect of whose life is to undermine moral beliefs; to undermine moral restraints; to undermine the faith which is the support of the soul!

Where a man has gone through a long life like this, it may very well be feared that he has sinned away the day of grace; that he is given over to a reprobate mind; that he has sinned against the Holy Ghost.

It is a very dangerous thing for a man to pervert his own moral sense —to pervert it so that there is in him no virtue, no truth, no piety; and then to pervert other people's moral sense as well. Such a course as that hardens and triple-hardens a man.

This may take place in even more ingenious and less suspected ways. A man may befog his conscience—and that is bad enough. A man may by a thousand little mean courses come to that which otherwise men come to by great leaps. I would rather have a man commit two or three great sins a year, and hold up all the rest of the time, than have him keep safely out of all great sins, and be forever nibbling on little, small, mean ways, that finally infix themselves upon his disposition.

If it is a thief, you must shut him out, or else you will lose all your linen and your clothes; but it is only once or twice a year that you need fear thieves. They are not apt to come into a man's house oftener than that; but they are one source of danger. Then there are moths. They come into your house; but with tolerable care you can keep them out. Then there is something finer yet—mildew and mould. These are great enemies. But there is something still worse, and that is bad washing, where you cut your clothes to pieces by caustics—where under the name of cleaning you rot the very fabric of your garments. You are in danger of having your clothes stolen once in a while by a big thief. Still more are you in danger of having them moth-eaten, or destroyed by mildew and mould. And yet more are you in danger of having their very substance corroded by the process which you employ in washing them.

Now, a man is in danger of losing his moral stamina by great sins. They are very dangerous; but they do not come very often. The loss of business, the breaking up of friendships, and a thousand other things, act as breakwaters, and tend to restrain men from such dangers. But there are other dangers that come like moths; and still others that come like mildew and mould; and others still that come in the guise of domestic cleansings, and destroy the fiber of the man.

Here is a man that you could not get to steal. He has a very great prejudice against jails, and he is not going to commit theft. And yet, there are a thousand ways in which a man, without stealing, can rasp off the corners of other men's interests. And there is many a man who is all the time hanging on the edge of men's necessities, and acting like a thief without a thief's boldness; pursuing little mean ways that are perpetually making himself better off than his fellow men. He is a universal absorbent of everybody that he touches. He goes around never doing anything very large or very right, but in every direction pursuing such little mean, wicked courses that the very substance of

his nature is disintegrated and destroyed by these erosions. By this minute, constant and continued tampering with his moral sense, he at last comes to that state in which the light of the glory of God, when it shines upon him, produces no more effect than the morning sun, shining upon the face of a corpse that lies in the east window.

When men lie dead in the house, the morning bell calls them not. They do not hear the children on the stairs. Their ears are deaf to the sweet sounds of birds out of doors. The beauty dispersed all abroad their eyes do not behold. And I see men whose moral sense is so dead that it is never touched by all the mercies of God above, nor by all the mercies of God distributed among men below. They are eaten up and destroyed utterly.

A man may come to the same state by a sort of egotism by which he puts himself in the place of God. When a man's vanity and self-conceit is so inordinate that he becomes everything to himself—that he becomes the universe to himself; that he becomes a deity to himself; that he becomes a supreme government to himself; that he makes a hideous idol of himself, and worships himself—then he has come to this state. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" It is the idolatry of egotism.

Of all God's gifts, there is none of such value as the moral sense, and there is none that we are so little likely to take care of, and to keep clear and sensitive, and divinely bright. The moral sense is the greatest treasure we have. I hear men thank God that he gave them such a reason. Reason is a stately and noble gift, surely; but conscience is better than reason. I hear men congratulating their fellows that God gave them genius. They are poets. They are orators. They are artists. They carve the stone. They depict in colors the various forms of life. And this, surely, is a munificent gift from the hand of God. But no genius is comparable to the sense of that which is right and wrong. Genius of conscience is the best genius that a man can have. I hear men thank God that they have warm affections; and it is a subject of thanksgiving; but, after all, that divinely enlightened eye by which a man can see things true in the heaven above and on the earth beneath, is far better. There is nothing that God ever gives to a man like a clear-eyed, wholesome, sensitive, prophetic, magisterial conscience, which shows him the path, even where men's feet have not walked, interpreting what is right and what is wrong, making him sensitive to all these things, and keeping him on the side of whatever is good, and just, and true, and pure, and of good report, among men or angels. But, though this is the greatest gift that God ever makes, it is the one that men are most

careless about. You may destroy almost everything else in a man; but so long as you keep that in him, you have in him the root of manhood. You may destroy that, and keep everything else, and the man will be utterly undone. Christ called it *the eye*. "The light of the body is the eye. If, therefore, the eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" No disaster can befal a man so great as the perversion and destruction of the eye of his soul.

A man may cut away every mast on his ship, and yet pursue his voyage. A man may have everything on deck carried overboard, and yet make some headway. A man in the middle of the ocean can afford to lose everything else better than he can afford to lose the compass in the binnacle. When that is gone he has nothing to steer by. That little instrument is his best friend. It is his guide. And that conscience which God has given you is your compass and guide. You can afford to lose genius, and taste, and reason, and judgment, better than that. Keep that as the apple of your eye. Keep it clear, and strong, and discerning. Be in love with your conscience; and let your conscience be in love with God. A conscience held in love, is the very foundation not only of a spiritual manhood, but of happiness in an earthly manhood.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Oh Lord our God, it is to thine infinite mercy and thine infinite goodness that we address ourselves. If thou wert to measure us as thou dost those who have kept their first estate in heaven—the spirits that dwell with thee—who of us could claim to approach thee or know thy fellowship. So far are we from knowledge, so far from conformity, so far from the spirit of the divine, who of us could venture to draw near to thy presence at all? Who of us could come boldly? Who of us would dare to call thee Father? And yet, thou hast put these most endearing words into our lips. For thou hast sent thy Son to say to us that henceforth we are not servants, but *friends*. Art thou then, our Friend, O Lord our God? And may we stand as friend with friend by thy side? And may we know all that thou dost? Thou hast taught us in lifting our heart heavenward to say *Our Father*. Art thou then, O gracious and all-loving, our Father? And are we as dear to thee as our children are to us? And wilt thou do for us what we would be willing a thousand times to do for our children? Thou dost reply to us, saying, If ye being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more your Father which is in heaven! And in this comfortable assurance, in this joyful trust of thy goodness, we have from day to day drawn near to thee; we have asked; we have reasoned; we have been guarded from evil; we have been upheld in good; we have seen dangers that drew near like night dispelled as by the morning. We have seen evils that shot over our heads, surcharged with bolts, driven away as winds drive the storm. We have seen our weakness strengthened, our sickness healed, our anxiety alleviated, and our darkness filled full of stars. Thou hast drawn near to us in our solitude. Thou hast been a better companion to us than those most beloved. Thou hast not only given us the light that is in this natural world, but shined into our heart by the Holy Spirit, and given us the light which shines from Christ Jesus. We have felt our lives made abundant and joyful, and in many respects victorious by thy grace. By the grace of God we are what we are. It is thy hand of love that has moulded us. And though sometimes thou hast in moulding so put forth thy strength that we called it sorrow, yet it has been love. Thy smitings and thy chastisements have been love. Our very wounds—thou hast made them by love to us. Thou hast touched us again, and healed us, and made us strong. And in all thy dealings with us, thou hast mingled mercy and severity. Thou hast shown thyself like a father unto us. We mourn that we should have grieved thee as we have. We mourn that we should have been as inconstant as we have been in goodness. We mourn that our strength should have lain so far down toward the material world on which we stand; and that in things spiritual, where holy aspirations dwell, we have been so feeble and so inconstant. Our day has been long in things natural, and short in things spiritual. O Lord, we make confession of our unworthiness, of our great weakness, of our infirmities; but chiefly of our sins, which are more than we can number. And yet thou art He that doth forgive. Thou dost teach us how to overcome evil. Thou art awaking in us a holy horror of it. Thou art making us love the things that are right because they are right, and bringing us into sweet agreement with all the ways of duty. Harmonious are they to our better thought. This is thy teaching. Be pleased, then, though we be slow and inconstant, and even disobedient, though we are infirm and weak, and even fractious, and sinful—be pleased All-loving Father, still to guide and still to instruct us. May we learn to possess our spirits in due humility before God. May we evermore be lowly and humble. Help us to carry ourselves among men in all charity and in true love. May we not be afraid of that which is right. May we fear only that which is wrong. And grant that all our life long we may feel that this is not the real life, but the shadow; that our substantial home is not that which man's hand can build, nor time pull down. May we feel that our home is in the unseen world—in that city of God—in that house not made with hands. Thou art making it near to us. Thou art sending there so many messengers—so many that we have learned to love upon earth, that are now looking out upon us, and that we find with our loving and searching thoughts—that heaven is indeed becoming populous to our realization. There are our little ones; there are our

parents; there are our brothers and sisters; there are our fondest companions. They have slept to earth, and are awakened to immortality; and they are as the angels of God. Every day we are drawing nearer to them; and every day our souls hear somewhat that it is not lawful for our bodies to understand. Every day we hear them crying out to us "Come, come." We are coming. By sickness, by pain, we are sped. By sorrows and by growing years we are sped. By troubles, which are called men's misfortunes, but which are God's winds sent to convey us, we are coming—coming to the General Assembly and Church of the first born, coming to the spirits of just men made perfect. We are forsaking the treasure of life. We are forsaking its languishing affections. We are forsaking the partial, and the little, and the low. We are reaching out toward the perfect, the joyful, the pure, the infinite and the eternal. O Lord our God! grant that we may not be sorry that life is spending itself. Grant that we may look forward to that other and better life with growing desire and yearning from day to day.

And now, may we make sure that we have thy friendship, and that our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And then may we welcome what Providence so far hath been pleased to send. Thou canst not make us poor who have heaven. Thou canst not make us sorrowful whose is all the assembly of the blessed. Thou canst not make us afraid—thou that dost love us, and hast redeemed us by thine own precious blood. Thy will be done. And so we shall have peace, and joy.

Bless we beseech of thee all that worship to-day, of every name; all thy servants who speak the truth, to a better discerning of the truth everywhere, and to a more earnest and heart-felt expression of it. And may thy truth have new power given to it from year to year. Give it authority to meet and overcome all lies, and all untruths of every grade spoken of men, or wrought into the texture of life May there be a power in the truth of God to overcome all iniquity and every evil. Fulfill the promises which respect the earth. Bring in Jew and Gentile and the fulness of the earth as the fulness of the sea.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father we beseech of thee that thou wilt add to the truth which we have spoken thy Spirit, by which it shall take hold upon the thought, upon the conscience, upon the understanding of every one. Make us honest with ourselves, and honest with thee. May thy spirit of all light shine into us. May we put between us and thee no veils and no hindrances. May our conscience be clear to thy shining, and true to those impressions which thou dost give us. May our lives follow our consciences so that at last when life shall be over, and we shall be ready to go out of school, it shall be well taught and well bred, and prepared for the higher school of better knowledge in thine immediate presence; where we will praise the Father, the Son and the Spirit, forevermore. *Amen.*

INHERITANCE OF THE MEEK.

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."—MATT. V. 5.

When our Lord spoke this, the whole world was apparently a witness against its truth. If one looked back from his point of time, the Oriental monarchies had existed in a state of almost continual war. The Persian dynasty had rolled its armies like waves over all the East. Of all forms of violence, none is more physical and brutal than military. Against the Persian, came the Grecian hosts; and, like a countertide from a stormier ocean, drove back and overwhelmed the violence of the Persian. Then the Roman Empire overthrew and dominated all governments; and at the time of Christ it was the one supreme power on the earth. And surely, it was not the *meekness* of Rome, then or since, which caused it to inherit the earth.

Palestine was in the hands of Roman governors, and was torn by factions, and was bubbling and overflowing like a crater, with incessant revolutionary outbreak. If there was any one thing in all the world which was sure of gaining universal control, it was cunning and violence. If there was one quality which was sure of being trodden down and despised, it was meekness. The extraordinary prophecy of Christ, "It shall inherit the earth,"—any thing but that! Had he said that if one withdrew himself from among men he would be happier in meekness, living by himself, that we should have understood. Had he said that meekness should inherit the world to come, or that it should give to the soul more true joy than victorious violence could do, or that it should be better than all other possessions, we should not have wondered. The one unlikely, if not impossible thing—that meekness should yet possess and govern the earth—was selected by our Saviour, and declared as a prophecy. And there stood that quiet prophecy, amidst the thunder of the universal battle that was then going on over all the earth.

Had the air been filled with eagles and vultures and hawks among which Jesus threw up a white dove, saying, "Blessed be the dove, it shall rule all the air," it would scarcely have seemed more strange. Had he sent a little lamb into the wilderness among the bears, and wolves,

SUNDAY MORNING, Dec. 26, 1869. LESSON: MATT. V. 1—16. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 655. 297, 288.

and lions, saying, "It shall go forth and prevail against them all," it would not have seemed more unlikely of accomplishment. Had he taken a sucking child from its mother's arms and appointed it ruler over warriors, or the beasts of the wilderness, it would have been no less reasonable. And yet, our Lord had only to go back to the prophecies which respected himself, to find every one of these figures expressly employed, in spirit at least, for the very same end,—as we shall find in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah:

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed: their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Let us, then, consider what is the full drift of this single announcement,—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

I begin by saying that meekness is not a faculty. It is not a single attribute of the soul. It is a state or condition of the whole mind. It is produced by the complete ascendancy of the highest moral feelings in our nature.

There are three generic conditions under which a man may hold his soul.

The first is where those instincts and passions which belong to our animal nature, and whose normal sphere is upon the material globe, predominate, and give tone to character. Under such circumstances, men are always sensual,—fleshly, in scripture language. They live by the force of their material organization.

But as men come under better influences, there grows up an intermediate state, a mixed character, in which force alternates with higher and better feelings. Under great excitement, the physical qualities predominate; but in times of quiet, and away from temptation, there grow up milder influences, nobler sentiments. The result is that there is an occasional outburst of feeling, and also an occasional experience of sweetness and peace. It is, in such circumstances, an alternating condition of the mind, which results in great strife and conflict between the one part and the other—between the higher and the lower nature. And the greater part of men in civilized countries live in this intermediate condition, in which the animal is not predominant, and in which the spiritual is not predominant, but in which sometimes one and sometimes the other rules, neither having free course.

Then there is a final state—the highest we know of—that in which the moral sentiments completely rule. Where these higher qualities

give expression to the whole life — to the face, to the tone of voice, to the language; where they surround the very soul, as with an atmosphere; where the whole nature is saturated with faith, hope, love — with truth, equity, benevolence — there is an air given to men, of strength in gentleness, of courage in sweetness, of activity in tranquility, of will without obstinacy, of self-confidence without conceit. All these qualities may exist in the individual, and over them all there shall be a luminous refinement, a spiritual glow, which saves the soul from the charge of insipidity and flatness, and gives it authority and vitality. When the soul is completely under the dominion of these spiritual emotions, it shines. It impresses all that come near it. It rules whatever is within its sphere. In short, the spiritual is to become supreme in authority. And that which makes us *men* — not that which makes us animals — gives color and tone to the whole life and character.

It is the atmosphere of the spiritual nature of man, or that appearance and those qualities which we see when the man is under the complete control of his higher moral sentiments, which is meant, by *meekness*. If you attempt to give a description of meekness you will certainly fail; because no word can define it. It is so comprehensive and so varying that you can only describe the circumstances under which it takes place; and those circumstances are that luminousness, that gentleness, that sweetness, that vitality, and that beauty, which act when the higher sentiments completely rule in a man, and give their natural language to his body, to his face, to everything that belongs to him.

To say that meekness shall inherit the earth, is to say that meekness is the strongest element in man; or that man, when he is disclosed in this manner,—when he is in great power, and when that power is of his higher moral sentiments,—is then in a condition of superiority. It is to say, in other words, that a man whose moral sentiments guide him wholly, is a stronger creature than that man whose basilar sentiments guide him wholly; and that mankind, when they shall come into the possession of these moral states, will dominate all lower states.

What I understand to be the scope of this declaration of Christ — "Blessed are the meek" — is, that the time is coming in which they shall inherit the earth. In other words, they are yet to govern. Manhood, when it comes out, comes out of its cruder conditions and lower states; manhood, when it begins to find itself, and take on its full divine forms; the ideal manhood — this so shows itself superior to everything beneath it, that to say that meekness shall rule, and that the meek shall inherit the earth, is to assert superiority in the true order of nature — it is to assert the superiority of the spiritual elements of

human nature over its lower passional elements. It is to declare that finally these elements which are superior shall, by virtue of their superiority, control the world.

The world has not been controlled by them thus far. Single families have. Occasional churches have. But no nation has. Neither has any department in any nation. The lower wisdom in many, which springs from passion, has governed the world, and still governs it. But a time is coming when men shall not laugh and scoff when we declare that the wisdom of conscience is better than the wisdom of pride; that the wisdom of love is better than the wisdom of selfishness; that the wisdom of faith, and of hope, and of the world to come, is better in the management of human affairs than the wisdom of the basilar and passional nature. The time is coming when men shall understand that they get better wisdom from the top of their head than from the bottom.

Hence, this declaration of our Master is not saying that now every man who is meek is going to possess the earth. Indeed, it does not mean possession in any such sense as that in which the word is used when we speak about a piece of ground which a man has in *fee simple*. It has no reference to the ownership of houses, and lands, and what not. It is *control*, rather than ownership, that is meant. And if you interpret this declaration to mean that one who has become truly meek, will, on that account, rise immediately above everybody else around about him, you will mistake its real import. Such a man will be superior to those around about him; but he will not be recognized as such by the community in which he dwells, until they have gone up so far in meekness that they can appreciate his superiority. Just so far as men are refined, they can appreciate refinement in others; but refinement among the Nootka Sound Indians is at a discount. They do not regard a man as superior who cannot fish and handle the bow and arrow. If he is merely refined and intellectual, they do not consider him superior to them.

This is the teleologic, and therefore the final condition. And the text simply declares the result which shall be achieved when the long battle is fought to victory. It simply states which part of the soul shall rule. It simply asserts what, when the long season is over, shall hang in ripeness and be gathered, and what shall be husk and chaff, and be burned up.

But even so explained, does it seem as though our Lord's words would ever come true? This is a day in which we are accustomed to speak of the influence of the divine nature—of our Master—on the world; but does it seem as if our Lord were gaining in the dominion of this world? There be many who think not. There be many who think religion is going backward. I am not of them. I believe reli-

gion is advancing. I believe it was never so deep, never so spiritual. I believe its claims were never so comprehensive in the recognition of men. I believe it was never so widely diffused. I believe it is taking other channels than the church. I believe there are other than ecclesiastical influences at work for its dissemination. If I believed that the Lord owned only Palestine, as the Jews did—or, in the modern version of it, that he owned only the church; if like our modern Christian Jews, I believed that all there was of Christ was inside of the church, I should mourn, with those who are assembled to-day to take counsel as to how they can withstand the incursions of free-thought and liberty. *Irreligion* they are pleased to call it; but I think it is no such thing. If we can discover what is the true order of nature in the unfolding and development of man, we shall then have a test by which to decide, not only whether the world is advancing, but whether the later developments are superior in power to the lower ones.

The unfolding of the human race, I need not say, at first is purely physical. Children are born as mere animals, and remain for a year or two as little animals. They are the most purely animals of anything that is born, at the beginning. The unfolding is gradual; and the order of it in the child is, first physical, then social, then nascently intellectual, and last of all moral. This last we hold to be the best, though it is the latest ripe. A child can walk and use its hands, and employ all its physical senses, before it has any social discriminations, affections, or instincts. Children begin to come along pretty soon; but they are very feeble at first. The child, little by little, in the ascending scale of development, begins to have intelligence, and soon knows the difference between friendliness and unfriendliness; and begins to live by its little tastes and affections. Still later the child begins to discriminate one thing from another—to perceive the differences of things. It rises, still later, to an understanding of cause and effect; to a perception of analogies; to the higher forms of intellectual discrimination And last of all it comes to its moral nature. For children, in early life, are animals not only because they live by their animal functions, but because they have no moral sentiments. Men that are pure and noble as men, lied like witches when they were boys. Their moral nature was dormant—was not yet developed. This is the order which we see in the household; and it certainly is the order which is seen in history as well—for races have unfolded in precisely the same way.

And that which is true of individuals, is true of nations. They unfold first by physical force; next by social refinement; next by philosophies and higher ranges of intellection; and last, by moral elements—which yet linger all over the world. The last is the highest. It takes the longest to come to it; it takes the longest world-discipline to

bring it out. It is the latest to be born, not only in nations, but in the globe, as it is in the family and in the individual. But when it comes it shall be the best, as it shall be the strongest.

This is the order of value, as well as the order of time, in development—first physical, then social, then intellectual, and then moral. It is a rude classification; but it is sufficiently accurate for general purposes. It is the order of value, or of estimation, both in the individual's own consciousness, and among his friends.

Where men have been developed in physical, social and intellectual qualities, they themselves value those qualities in just that order. And they are the only ones that are competent to judge of them. But where men have been developed morally, as well as physically, socially and intellectually, not only they themselves, but all others—even those who have simply a rude, twilight understanding—are able to estimate that highest form of development.

Now and then an event occurs which develops the latent judgment of men in respect to this order of value. While I was yet a young man, living in Cincinnati, there came a wandering circus there, in which one of the principal athletes was a man built like a second Apollo. He was magnificent in every physical excellence, and as handsome as a god. A young lady of one of the very first families there, attracted by his beauty and grace, became enamored of him. He, of course, complimented, reciprocated this wild attachment. And in the enthusiasm and ardor of her unregulated and foolish affection, she proposed an elopement to him. Ordinarily, a man would have been more than proud—because she was heir to countless wealth, apparently, and certainly stood second to none there; but with an unexpected manliness, that surprised every one, he said to her, "No, I can not afford to have you despise me. I am older than you are, and, although I am highly complimented and pleased, by-and-by you would reproach me, and say that I ought to have taught you better, and ought to have done otherwise. I will carry you back to your friends. I will not permit you to sacrifice yourself on me." And he refused to take advantage of the opportunity which she offered him.

Ten thousand men admired this man's athletic skill in the circus; but when that story was known, every one of them thought infinitely more of him than they did before. Here were two traits. First, there was the physical trait of grace and power as an athlete. Everybody admired that. But when there rose out of that this nobler trait—this disinterestedness, this magnanimity, this great and unexpected sense of justice and rectitude, and men saw it, they thought as much more of him as it was possible for them to think. And though, even in a rude class of the community, when a man addresses himself to the senses,

everybody admires him as an animal, yet if, at the same time, he develops a truly noble and manly trait, everybody feels, "How much higher that is!"

Because this man was a gymnast, everybody was enthusiastic over him; and afterwards, because he was a *man*, they recognized the manly element in him as nobler than the animal. So that once in a while, even in a rude state of community, among the commonest people, people of the least power of moral discrimination, if you present to them a case in which the contrast is strong and sharp between the higher and the lower, they appreciate it. All men's higher sentiments acknowledge that the higher element, not merely of reason or of obligation, but of loveliness, of desirableness, or of praiseworthiness, is the moral element, when they see the truth purely.

One trouble is that men hear a great deal about moral qualities, but do not see much of them. They hear ministers preach about them, they hear church-members talk about them, and they wish they could see them; but unfortunately moral qualities are largely in the ore: they are adulterated; they are in the dross; and people cannot see them. It is with them as it is with gold. Because they come in the ore, and not in bars, and with the image and superscription of God on them, men do not recognize them. But they will recognize them when they have a chance to see them. The rudest men recognize that there is an intrinsic superiority in the higher over the lower qualities of a man.

Even in barbarous times this has been so. If we examine those histories which run clear back to the earliest and fabulous periods, we find that the things which men have, as it were, carried in their bosom of bosoms, as mothers carry their babes, have not been the things which men did by physical violence. To be sure, Hercules, and Theseus, and Samson, and other such great, clumsy, coarse, brutal heroes, have had a place in the world's history; but, after all, there is nothing that shines with so pure and steady a light of universal admiration as the story of friends that died for each other; as the story of Lucrece, that would not live but in virtue; as the story of Curtius, who would gladly give his life for patriotism—for his country. These heroic and glorious acts of higher morality are, after all, the lamps which burn in the temple of history, and are fed by the admiration of mankind so that they never go out. And they show that even in rude ages, if you can bring clearly before men the higher exhibitions of human nature, in contrast with the lower, everybody recognizes them, everybody rejoices in them, everybody is enthusiastic over them.

Men run after physical things; they are excited to enthusiasm by them; but after enough time is given them for reflection, and they have come into their best moods, they still recognize, not, unfortunately,

in everything, but in enough things to show that they have the power of recognizing it, the superiority of the moral over all that is below it.

This, then, if you look at it narrowly or particularly, is after the order of historic development. Man is first low and animal. When he improves a little, he becomes social. When he improves still more, he becomes intellectual. When he improves more yet, he comes into the range of the higher moral sentiments. And true manhood is the blossom and fruit. When a man is developed in the higher elements, he is not strongest at the bottom; he is not strongest in the middle; he is strongest and noblest when he rises to that which comes latest, and with the most difficulty.

Men are by nature barbarians. By *barbarians*, we mean creatures, or people, that live by force alone, or principally. Then they become semi-civilized. And what we mean by a nation's being *semi-civilized*, is, that there is infused upon force a principle of refinement, both in morals and in civil and private administration; that men have a rational element added to the element of force. Then they become civilized. That is, so to say, they not only introduce a degree of rationality, but profess to be controlled by a principle of equity and refinement, as well as reason. And certainly, none will deny that a civilized man is more truly a man than one that is barbarous. And yet, he is only the seed.

Now take a civilized people, take men in civilized societies, and rank them according to the order of their moral development, and according to the sum of force which there is in their moral development. In a civilized community, when all excitement is gone, when time has been given for men's feelings to settle, he rises to the top, he stands highest, who exhibits the most of the moral elements.

In our own history, Aaron Burr was a keener thinker than George Washington. He was a far more ingenious man, a far more active man; and if he had been a moral man, and had maintained normal relations with himself, with his fellow men, and with the laws of rectitude, he would have been an abler man. Washington was a man of good sense, but he was not a man of genius in any direction except that of conscience. He was a man of singular equity, of great disinterestedness, and of pure and upright intent. Sagacious he was, by the light which comes from integrity. He endured, having faith to believe that right was right, that right was safe, and that right in the end would prevail. That which made Washington the only great hero of our Revolutionary struggle, was the light of the moral element that was in him—not any intellectual genius which he possessed; not any peculiar social endowments; not any rare tact in administration, nor any remarkable executive power. And if you look back upon those names in our history that have best stood the test, you will find that

they have been men who were fruitful in the highest moral elements. And as time goes on, those men who lack these elements sink lower and lower till they set below the horizon; and those men who possess them rise higher and higher, till they reach the meridian, with undying splendor to shine upon history and the world.

So there is a rude judgment-day going on all the while; and all men's judgments, when they have time to think, are more and more concurring in this—that "the name of the wicked shall rot," and that "the memory of the just is blessed."

Here, then, we have a disclosure of the divine decree. We perceive that in the unfolding series, men are rising in value, power, and beauty, just in proportion as they give strength to each successive section of their natures.

Men have supposed that to rise to our higher feelings, we must quench our lower feelings. No mistake could be greater. A true man is one who has physical power, social richness, intellectual acumen, *and* the moral elements. The moral elements are not at all antagonistic to any of these other forces. Once let a man be harmonious by giving the sway to his higher sentiments, and every part of him adds both to his strength and to his richness.

When the painter lays on the first and foundation colors, they are not to stand there crude and rude. He goes on with a thousand fine strokes, overlaying and overlaying them. What for? To wipe them out? No. They are the foundation which is to make the final picture stand. They give body to it; and, shining through, they give it a sort of subtle lustre which the surface-colors alone could not give. And so it is in true manhood. We rise higher than the basilar elements; but we never want them destroyed. We want the hidden power which they shoot up through. We want them to give energy, and breadth, and color, and warmth to all the moral sentiments.

When, therefore, a man becomes a perfect man, he is perfect in his lower nature, perfect in his social nature, perfect in his intellectual nature, and perfect in his moral nature—all the lower serving the higher, and the higher predominating, and giving an atmosphere of great power, and great peaceableness, and great manhood, and great blessedness therein.

Now, when a man is perfectly covered and filled with the perfection of these sweet and higher spiritual elements, he is m Some have supposed that a meek man was one who, when he was hit, just did not hit back. I despise such meekness as that. To be lean and rat-like, running round in the holes of life, is not to be meek. Meekness is that great luminousness which the complete ascendancy of all the higher and nobler instincts of man gives to the whole expression

of his life—to his eye, to his face, to his words, and to his deeds. It is the richness of the divine elements in a man that makes him illustrious and beautiful.

Christ was meek. "I am," he said, "meek and lowly." "Learn of me." Was there ever one who stood in more personal majesty than he did? Was there ever one who had more clearness of understanding than he had? Was there ever one who had more firmness of will than he had? Was there ever one who exhibited more significantly than he did the very pattern and ideal of perfect manhood? He was meek because that which constitutes meekness is the full expression of the harmony of all the moral sentiments.

In view of this exposition, I remark,

1. The spread of Christ's kingdom is a very different thing from what materializing theologians have supposed. It is not overrunning the earth externally. This world might have a church in every village with the Westminster Catechism, and as sound a preacher as ever preached from any pulpit; and every man, woman and child might be required to say the Catechism every day, and yet the whole set of them might be heathen; because it is not mere intellectual submission to certain views that makes the world Christian. The world is Christian just in the proportion in which, in its individuals, and in its communities, the higher elements of the human soul entirely dominate.

If you ask me whether, considered instrumentally, it is not likely that evangelical churches and sound orthodox belief will tend to free a man from the bondage of his lower nature, and raise him to a higher moral state, I say, Yes. They are excellent tools to work with. Nevertheless, as many a farmer has had a barn full of tools which he did not use, and has had poor crops, so orthodoxy and evangelical organizations may have but little power on the earth. You may spread them round and round the globe; and yet, Christianity may not spread. Christianity works vertically as well as horizontally. It spreads over the earth—for everywhere Christ is to be known and preached; but it spreads in the *proportion* in which it elevates the whole nature of each individual man. And it elevates him in the proportion in which it holds the emphasis of authority in his estimation. With us authority is in the physical and material part of our nature. We are amplified and refined as we go up and begin to hold in check all the physical endowments; all the social elements; all the interests of pride and vanity; all the degrading effects of organized society-life. We are not Christian until we rise so high that it is not even the affections that rule any more—until we rise so high that the moral sentiments are supreme. It is love in all its benignities and beneficences, it is faith in all its idealities and aspirations, r

is hope in all its courage and cheerfulness and buoyancy, that constitutes Christianity. Christianity is not as flat as uncorked beer, as many people seem to think it is. A man who merely does not do any hurt—is he a Christian? A man that is simply harmless—is he a Christian? Then a griddle-cake is a better Christian than anything else. It does not do any hurt. Let it get cold, and it will not even burn you. There are many men who are flat, cold, stale, and unprofitable; and it is supposed, because they do not do any harm, that they are Christians. No! A Christian sparkles. He is full of fire; but it is a fire that does not burn. He is full of power; but it is a power that does not thunder. He is full of life; but it is a life that develops itself in higher and not in lower forms—in things that go to make him a man in Christ Jesus.

If you think that when Christianity comes into a man's soul, it makes him smaller, if you think it minifies him, you are mistaken. When Christianity comes into a man's soul it magnifies him; it enlarges him; it ennobles him. When you become a Christian, you simply shift the balance of power, taking it out of the hand, and putting it into the brain; taking it out of the lower nature, and putting it into the higher reason, into the love principle, and into the spiritualizing elements. And when a man has changed the seat of authority so that that which is above dominates, then he has become a Christian.

Can a man become a Christian without acknowledging Christ? Just as far toward it as an apple can ripen without acknowledging the sun. An apple can grow, and get size, and get shape, and get juice without the shining of the sun; but I will defy any apple to get sweetness out of that juice, I will defy any apple to change its sour sap into sweet sap, until it has had the sun shining on it. And no man can become a Christian without the supernal light.

But I believe many a man gets that light who does not know where he gets it. In other words, that which I believe to be Christ, many a man calls "God," or "Father;" and he gets that divine light, that ripening spiritual influence, by which the sour sap changes to saccharine sap. So that a man may recognize not the name, but only the power; and getting the power, he gets the thing. Yet, no man can be a Christian except under the influence of the light which comes from above.

You may carry a lighted candle into a conservatory; but it will coax out no blossom. If, however, you let the sun shine in on the plants, a thousand blossoms will come out at once. And there is no mere human element that will ever bring out the blossoms of the soul. You must get the Sun of Righteousness to shine into the soul if you would have it blossom.

A man may stumble about a name, or about a philosophy; but the

thing itself is that which develops the lower part of a man, and that without which there is no development of it.

2. If you look at it in this way, there has been an immense development made toward the ascendancy of the moral elements in this world. Consider where, in the time of our Saviour, when he said, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth," the great elements of power resided. All modern Europe had no existence, to all intents and purposes. Hispania lay in darkness. All Italy lay in paganism. It was strong in military and art elements; but it was heathen It was powerful, but cruel and hard. Rome was the insignia of power, with a stronger element of the physical than of the intellectual or the moral. Gaul was a vast wilderness. All Britain was, as it were, sunk below the horizon. And this continent was not known. The power lay in Italy; in Greece; in Palestine. In them was the substantial power of the world. They were all heathen. Everything else was gloom, *gloom!*

Two thousand years have nearly passed away. Rome has gone under. Greece has gone under. Palestine has gone under. Egypt has gone under. Syria has gone under. The elevations have all sunk below the level. You cannot see them anywhere. And what have come up? The nations that are the most Christian; the nations that represent the highest moral ideas; all Christian nations which are highest, which are freest, which are best governed.

Where is life securest? Where is property most facile of acquirement, and most stable in using? In those nations that reach highest up in intelligent Christianity. I do not say it for the sake of invidious comparisons; but show me a nation in which Christianity is most in its ecclesiasticisms, in which it is most in hierarchal hands, and I will show you a nation that is lower in industry, lower in thrift, and lower in the popular power, than nations contiguous, in which the heart is unbound, and the understanding is enlightened, and the conscience is free. Just in proportion as nations have developed the higher qualities of the moral nature of man, they have gone up in power, and, I think, are to go up.

There have been some elements developed in our great struggle which we ought not to forbear to emphasize. In the first place, there are nations on the globe that have been warring from time immemorial; but there is not one of them that could ever have gathered such armies for so long a period of time—armies, too, that could be gathered only by the consent of the governed—as were gathered in this nation. Such armies could not be gathered except in a nation where the reason and conscience were free, and where religion had been the culture of the people from the very cradle. And when they were

gathered, what patience and long endurance were required to support them! What vast tides of taxes were demanded! These taxes had to be voted by the men that paid them; and yet, how they flowed in like Gulf Streams! And how did men's fortitude grow to the last! For I think the people were never so determined as in the later stages of this war. The rulers, for the most part, were fainter hearted than the people. And it was one of the significant excellences of that man whose head lies low to-day, that, standing in a place of eminent authority, he was fully up to, and really beyond the courage and determination of the great common people. He was that man who gave power, and faith, and marrow, and force, to all the departments of government. I think we owe more to Edwin M. Stanton for the final victories of the struggle, than to any or all other men that wielded pen or sword. And I believe that by-and by his name, instead of being covered with clouds and going lower, will rise from those prejudices which came from an infelicitous manner, and stand higher and higher among the stars in our patriotic firmament, not far from the great unquenched orb of Washington.

Consider, too, how, since the paroxysm, the confusion and the passion of our great conflict have passed away, the conscience of the nation has stood steadfastly to national equity. Our war, like all wars, threw up mire and dirt. I think there has been a vast amount of evil occasioned by the war. We are now combatting pecuniary briberies which came from the immense contract system of the army. And consider how, though we are tainted and specked here and there, that fundamental integrity which has had so long a fight, maintains itself still, and is bound that faith shall be kept with every creditor of the nation. There are thirty millions of people, widely divided by parties; and large sections of them are interested to destroy the credit of the loan occasioned by the war; but such is the force of moral principle in this nation, that, though free as the wind, they stand as firm as the hills, and say, "*Faith shall be kept!*" Where has that conscience come from? What education has brought us to it? Here is a democratic people, free in institutions, free in laws, and whose word is law—for who shall gainsay the omnipotence of the decisions of this people; and yet, they are not coerced, nor bribed, nor intimidated; but by some inward moving principle, they have said, "FAITH SHALL BE KEPT!"

Are these things to be unmarked? Has the end come to such ideas of national conscience? It is the freest nation of the globe that says these things. I affirm that at no former period of the world could such a phenomenon have been found. And this is one of the indications that the nation itself is more Christianized than people think. There is yet a great deal to be done yet. We are not a perfect nation

What I am interested to show, is, that we are growing in the right direction, and that Christianity is doing its work. I desire to show, not that we have become meek, but that we are developing in the direction of meekness—that we are rising from the animal, through the social and intellectual, toward the moral and the spiritual elements!

In looking over the world, I see, not alone in this, but in every department of life, as society is organized, the development of the same traits. Business begins to develop them. It has become almost a truism that no art is permanent that has not a moral element in it. The same thing is true in regard to pleasure. Pleasures do not satisfy which have not in them a moral element. It is so with business. It is coming to be understood that business has rights. It is so, likewise in diplomacy. Diplomacy is no longer the cunning thing that it has been. Whereas it used to be a trap in whose meshes men sought to catch each other, it is now becoming honest in every direction. And you shall find that all through the various organizations of society the same tendency is manifesting itself. Development is everywhere along the same line—from the lower toward the higher; from the animal and coarse, toward the moral and spiritual; from the law of violence, toward the law of reason and right.

And this development is broader than it ever was. It is in its youth yet. It is full of activity. And the world is going on to fulfill the declaration of Christ, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." By-and-by—slowly—the time is coming when men will be more honored than they ever were. The time is coming when good men that have power withal will stand higher than ever. The time is coming when we shall have good men everywhere. The last thing I suppose, that will be conquered, will be the temptations of the State itself. The temptations of power, and the temptations which cluster around the revenues, are so great that it is hard for human nature to stand up under them; and the last thing, probably, that will be truly just and truly spiritual, will be the administration of laws and political trusts. And yet, by-and-by the time will come when we shall have better magistrates, and better legislators, and better administrators, throughout society. And then business, in all its parts, will work from the law of force up to the law of right; pleasure will work up; literature will work up; art will work up; and administration itself will work up. By-and-by the time will come when good men, sublime and sweet, will be dominant in all the earth.

Some men call this the *millenium*. Call it what you will. It is the ripeness of the race. It is the final state toward which all people are working. It is said of the Master that "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem;" and the world's face, to-day, is *as though it*

would go toward the New Jerusalem. The way is dark, but it is opening. More and more the lines of light are appearing. It is twilight yet; but the sun is not far below the horizon. Come, O Sun of Righteousness! Arise, with healing in thy beams!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We are drawn to thee, our Heavenly Father. Even as the flowers are drawn to the sun, they know not why, so our souls rise toward thee, without thinking—without the consciousness of foregoing want—by the direction of thy nature; by the want of our own which answers to thine. And so, unconsciously, we cry, "Abba, Father." So in our deepest want, and in our highest joy, thou art our Friend—the Friend that feeds the soul, and meets its want and aspiration, and gives it joy. We have so long known thee, we have so long felt thy presence, thy life has so long been mixed with ours, that we begin to know something of that divine unity which thou hast promised us. And it is nothing of ourselves, but that of thee which is in us, which gives us patience and forbearance against provocation; which raises us, when men assault us, into joy, rather than plunges us into sorrow; which takes from us the hurt and the sting of humiliation in bankruptcy and loss, which brings us near to thee, by the things which men call *destroying*. It is thy spirit which is unsealing the eye; which is opening boundless riches beyond and above the senses. It is thy spirit which is making the vast and the impalpable clear and easily to be discerned by that inward nature of ours. It is thy spirit that is peopling the heavens, and bringing forth to our summons multitudes, among whom fly blessed spirits that were our own, that have been released from the imprisoning body, that dwell with thee, and that are above the stars, and brighter than they, and are as the children of God. And yet, they are ours—ours by memory; ours by yearning; ours by all our heart-claspings; and ours forever, because they are thine. They are God's; and all things that are his are thine; and all that is thine is ours—for we are one with thee.

We rejoice that thus, not according to the measure of our knowledge, but according to the measure of thine own knowledge, thou art filling us with all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Thou art dealing thy mercies out to us, not according to the measure of desire on our part, but according to the measure of thine own wisdom. As we deal with our children, and do for them, and compel them to do the things which we know will ennoble their manhood, and plant thick now the seeds which shall bring forth the fruit of joy by-and-by, overruling their impatience, and disappointing their hopes today; so art thou acting according to thy wisdom, and overruling our short-sighted desires, and quenching our prayers with sorrows that seem to us enmities at the time, but which abound in the love of God, and bring forth glorious fruit in us by-and-by. We have learned that no affliction is for the present joyous, but grievous, but that afterwards it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness in them which are exercised thereby.

O thou God of the dark hand! smite on. O thou God of the mysterious wisdom! still legislate for us. O thou round about whose throne are clouds and darkness! ride forth, and be supreme over us and all the earth. Thy will be done. Though our pride tremble; though our selfishness weary itself with resistence; though our vanity is pierced, and moans; though our inordinate affections suffer, thy will be done. Yet deal gently. Build us up not too fast. Let us not be quite destroyed when we are cast down. Lift us again from beneath thy bruising blow, and thy wounds, and bring us health, that we may rejoice in the mercy of our God. Thou wilt. Thou wilt not forget the bruised reed. Thou art so gentle that thine utmost desire breathed forth shall not quench the smoking flax until thou bring forth judgment unto victory.

Even so, Lord Jesus we surrender ourselves to thy care. We pray for thy watching. We implore thy spirit to be breathed on all our inward life. We ask that we may live

in such a spiritual vision that heaven shall be apparent, and that we may see Him who is invisible, and that we may dominate the earth by the power of faith in the world to come.

Draw near, we beseech of thee, to all those whose outward strength fails, to those who drink a bitter cup; to those whose burden seems at times greater than they can bear. Thou with inward strength canst gird them for the battle, and cause them, when they have done all, still to stand and be steadfast unto the end. But grant that troubles and sorrows may not come and go without benefit. May we not be so afraid of being afflicted, as of being afflicted without profit. May all our sorrows ripen us. Even as acerb fruits late in autumn will not sweeten until the frost has fallen upon them, and then they turn their glowing cheek to the sun, and grow rich; so when thou dost send thy frosts upon us, grant that we may grow sweeter and riper under them. May we be more gentle and have more faith in invisible things. May the outward world have less dominion over our senses. May we count manhood to be higher up. May we seek the things which are above, at the right hand of God, where Christ sitteth.

And so we pray that thou wilt grant to us, during this year upon which we are soon to enter, more blessings than thou hast during the year which is issuing and perishing. Thou hast made this year one of great mercies; but we pray that we may more than ever grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thou hast blessed this church, and gathered into it multitudes of such as shall be saved; but we beseech of thee that this year may be barren of blessings to this church, as compared with the year which is to come. More may there be that shall be brought from darkness to light; more singing souls may there be that shall rejoice in the new-found mercy of God. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt come and bring joy into all our dwellings. And if we wear the garments of affliction, still we beseech of thee that we may have joy in our sorrow, and songs in our night.

And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all our families. May they be more and more households of faith. May they be more and more gates of heaven to us. And we pray that all the sanctities of love may abound in them. And may we be nourished as in thine own peculiar church, and in thy very favored dwelling. In every household may we be nourished, so that we shall be fitted for that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

We pray for our land. Grant, we beseech of thee, that thy blessing may rest upon the President of these United States, and upon all who are associated with him in authority; upon Congress assembled; upon the Legislatures of the various States; upon all courts and magistrates. And grant that all that hold office may be men who shall fear God, and whom God shall love. Grant, we pray thee, that as one and another whom thou hast ordained with great strength and wisdom are passing away, we may not be unmindful of thy favors to us in the men of our day who have borne the burden and the heat thereof manfully. We thank thee for so many who have set examples to men, of integrity, and of might in well-doing. And we pray that there may be found others upon whom their mantle shall worthily fall. Let us not be left unrich in manhood. Destroy our ships; destroy our dwellings; but grant that poverty may not come upon manhood in this nation. Raise up nobler men—men that shall scorn bribes; men that shall not run greedily to ambition; men that shall not be devoured by selfishness; men that shall fear God and love man; men that shall love this nation with a pure and disinterested love. And so we beseech of thee that our peace may stand firm upon integrity, and that righteousness may everywhere prevail. And in its greatness save this nation from cruelty. May we not imitate the bad examples which we abhor, and lift up the hand of our might to beat down the weak and the needy. At last may there be found one nation dwelling in peace, that shall stand to succor and defend the nations of the earth, and to spread abroad all the blessings which are in Christ Jesus. And so may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in all the earth, that wars shall cease, that ignorance shall flee away, that superstition shall die, that intelligence, and virtue, and piety shall thrive, and that thy supremacy shall be established on the earth.

And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

MEMORIALS OF DIVINE MERCY.

"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1 SAM. VII 12.

After the death of Eli, the prophet, Samuel not only became priest, but, in the anomalous condition of the Israelitish kingdom, he became substantially the sole ruler. The regular government seems to have fallen entirely to the ground—partly because the people were in such an ignorant and degraded state that they were unable to maintain a regular form of government such as theirs was. For the old Hebrew government was substantially a commonwealth—a republican government. It had in it the seeds and roots of that very government which now exists over us. But the people, not instructed, and easily seduced from their allegiance to virtue and religion, had been shattered by the aggression of neighboring nations, and of those whom they had failed to expel from within their borders, and had been reduced to a very low condition—one of great misery. Their very ark had been captured, and carried away (although it was ultimately recovered and saved); and they were in degradation, and under extreme oppression. It was at this time that Samuel appeared, not simply as the judge, making circuit, and as the priest, making sacrifice, but as the leader of the people. Hearing their lamentations, and profoundly affected, as every great soul that loves his country must be by its suffering and degradation, he called the people together to Mizpeh, and then declared to them the way of the Lord. And there the people confessed their great misery and their sin.

"Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods, and Ashteroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim, and Ashteroth, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."

When it is said that they "drew water, and poured it out before the Lord," we are to understand that this was the Oriental method. Symbols in the Oriental method were what language is in our instruc-

SUNDAY MORNING, Jan. 2, 1870. LESSON: 2 COR. V. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 199, 907.

tion —words being only symbols. And the Israelites, to express the brokenness of their hearts, to convey the idea that their hearts were melted within them, *poured out water*, as much as to say, "So our hearts flow out before God."

We find frequent recognition of this in the Psalms:

"I am poured out like water." "My heart is like wax. It is melted in the midst of my bowels."

In Lamentations, Jeremiah says:

"In the beginning of the watches pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord."

So that the statement, that they "drew water, and poured it out before the Lord," merely signifies that, by a symbolic act, they expressed before God this profound grief, and their penitence.

It is said that at this time "Samuel judged the children of Israel The whole nation was full of wrongs, and unsettled quarrels, and complaints, and feuds, and a thousand entanglements which grow up under malign feeling. And he settled everything, and harmonized the people, and made justice among them, so that they felt that the past was settled, and that they had now a new future before them.

"And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

This follows in the line of other such like uses of rude monuments. When the Israelites crossed the Jordan, they took, you will recollect, stones out of the middle of the river, and brought them over, and established a monument. There will recur to your memory many instances in which there were some such memorials as these.

Now, here was a great victory; and Samuel took a stone, and set it up as a rude monument. Art, in later days, has perfected the monumental system; and we rear monuments which represent the skill and taste of the people, to commemorate great events. In earlier days, and in simpler ways, perhaps, and with as much patriotism, though with less taste, monuments were erected of heaps of stone, or of single slabs of stone. And to emphasize this great victory, Samuel erected this rude stone. Not, however, for the sake of inspiring the people with a sense of their own courage; and not simply with the purpose of inspiring them with patriotic ardor. He set up the stone, and said "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." For all the preparation for this

warfare had been moral. There was no drilling of the clans—for the tribes were but clans; there was no battle array; there was no military hero. Samuel, eminently a priest and a civilian, had led them into this battle; and the people were afraid when they knew that the Philistines were coming upon them. And when they had repented; when they had settled their wickednesses among themselves; when they had turned their hearts toward God, and promised to serve Him only; and when Samuel had performed the sacrificial service, and blessed them, and sent them forth to the battle, probably some great storm occurred, or might have been ordained of God, or might have been appropriated for that occasion as a providence of God. At any rate, God "thundered" in the heaven, and the Philistines were appalled, and thought that the Gods of the Hebrews were fighting against them; and the battle went against them; and all the people rolled on, and drove their oppressors and adversaries to their uttermost cities. Where Bethcar was, modern research cannot determine; nor is it particularly important. On returning from this great victory, Samuel set up this memorial-stone, that all Israel might look upon it, and remember that *hitherto the Lord had helped them.* Not their own prowess, not their own military skill, but the hand of the Lord, in which they trusted, had delivered them.

There is, then, a distinct recognition, here, of the hand of God in providence; and there is a marking of the event of God's interference in their behalf by some visible outward sign which would serve to bring it back to them. For no man, after the battle and the victory, returning that way, and beholding this stone, would forget it. They would cherish it in their memory, and tell their children of it. And if their occasions or needs ever took any of them again through the region of their old captivity, their old fear, the old battle and the old victory, that outside memorial would stand to remind them, not merely of each external event, but also of the interior moral truth that it was of the Lord's mercies that they were preserved, and that it was of God's interposing providence that they were victorious.

Now, we are in many respects like the Israelites. We, too, have a promised land into which we are brought by our hopes in Christ. Our promised land is just like Palestine. Its mountains and passes are filled with unsubdued inhabitants. They are all about us. On the East are the Moabites and the Hivites, and on the West and Southwest are the Philistines, hanging on the skirts of our spiritual kingdom, or in the midst of it, in their mountain dens and fastnesses. We, too, are watched. Often incursions are suddenly made against us, and we are carried into captivity, or are humbled in battle. Often, too, the hand of the Lord is lifted up in our behalf; and the

battle goes against the Philistines, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and the inhabitants of the land, and we beat them down, and we drive them back, so that they have no more dominion over us for a time. We are full of conflicts. And yet, we maintain our ground, and hold ourselves only by vigilance, as in the presence of a continually watching enemy. And in this great warfare, which goes on with all true Christians, and goes on just in proportion as they are truly Christian: just in proportion as their standard of Christian life is high; just in proportion as they are determined to bring every thought and feeling into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ; just in proportion to the comprehensiveness and richness of that which they mean by being Christians in their life and disposition—in this great warfare your conflicts are many, and the vicissitudes of those conflicts are many.

There are, in the history of every man, certain remarkable events that are worthy to be remembered. At any rate, there are divine interpositions in our behalf, as there was here a divine interposition, by which Israel gained a victory. And as Samuel, inspired of God, set up an external memorial, as a witness of that event, that he and his people Israel might not forget to be grateful; so in our conflicts it is well for us to mark the interpositions of God's providence in our behalf. It is well for us from point to point to set up some memorial, according to our disposition and circumstances, and to say, from step to step, "Hitherto, the Lord hath helped me." It is worth our while to keep in review all the goodness of God to us along the line of our march, and to have imperishable memorials of that goodness.

The gracious and providential interference of God in our behalf deserves to be noted. The memory of all his mercies ought to be perpetuated. Every critical period, as the turning of the year; every point of success in any enterprise of life; every point where we gain a higher joy, whether it be secular, or social, or spiritual; every new relation which promises great blessedness to us; every business achievement which seems to lift us out of darkness and out of difficulties; every great mischief that impended as a threatening sky, but that is rolled away—every such event or experience ought to have a distinct recognition.

We live so fast, and we live in such thunder and din, that thousands of things are happening in the course of the year which are pre-eminently efficacious in working out our disposition and our nature, which are educating us, and which are having a great influence in determining our whole future condition, but which go so quick, or are heeded so little, that they pass by without any special recognition. And yet, no man ought to allow anything which has a distinct influence on his personality to go unthought of, unstudied, unrecognized.

There are critical experiences which befall every household; and they ought to become a part of the calendar of that household. The birth of a child; the death of a child; the marriage hour of a child; the point at which a child is received into the visible body of the Lord Jesus Christ; times of bankruptcy; times of recovery from poverty; times of sickness; times of returning health—these are eminently significant. It is not enough to think of them as among the rubbish of mere secular happenings. They go back. They have vital bearings. They make us worse. They make us better. They lift us up. They crush us down. They are at work on our immortality. Something in heaven will by-and by say to us, "This sprung from that;" and the threads of being will then be traced all the way down to experiences here upon earth. And as these things occur it is wise for us to heed them, to study them, to set them apart from the ordinary flow of events, and to say in respect to them, "The Lord hath done this;" or, "The hand of the Lord is in this."

And that which is true of these external and social influences, is more eminently true of internal experiences.

The coming on of a great trouble or grief (and every heart knows its own sorrow); the hours of anguish, which we may or may not confide to another; those habitual troubles which weigh down life with a perpetual gravitation; and, on the other hand, the rolling away of grief; the glad morning after the night; the dawn of great affections in the soul—which are the best blessings that God ever gives, and are to us what the coming of the morning sun is to the day; the emerging into the light of a new faith; victories over easily besetting sins; the conquest over inbred sins; clearer views; stronger impulses of conscience; a new sense of manhood infused into our souls; a more heroic impulse taking the place of a craven or mere physical habitude of obedience—all these critical inward experiences are worthy of some external recognition. That is, we should specialize them. We should think of them in their individuality, and in their sequences; and it would be well for us if we could set up some memorial, and be able to say to one and another, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me. It is the Lord—not my skill, not my wisdom, not my prowess—that hath helped me hitherto."

Our true life is the inward life. It deserves, therefore, to be specially watched and recorded. No other thing deserves such celebrations as a man's inward victory—his inward deliverance. A blessing that comes from God should be recognized by us, though it comes in no visible form. If God were to send to us a great fortune, how would our friends come in to congratulate us! If it were known that some far off, distant, and perhaps unknown or unrecognized one, had died

and left a million of dollars to me, should I not receive at my door the visits and congratulations of sympathizing friends? And yet, there is more treasure and power in one great thought that clears life of mystery, that sheds its beams along down the path that my feet are to tread, that gives me a broader horizon, a higher vision, and a sweeter, truer and nearer God, than in all the possession of the broad earth. If one had been in great trouble, and bankruptcy had rolled over him, and humiliation had followed, and if he had been delivered from the pride and arrogance of oppressing creditors, and reinstated, and placed in the midst of his former friends, there would be great reason for gratulation, and great reason why he should set up a memorial. But if one has been living a life of ordinary care, and insight has sprung up in him, and great affection has taken possession of his mind, and sweet influences have come upon him, softening his temper, quickening all his hope of life, and breathing like fragrant summer in every direction, there is more reason still why he should set up a memorial. The possession of a new fountain of love in one's soul is far more than his reinstatement in external prosperity. God's greatest gifts are those which he gives to the inward affections—to the soul's owers. And although outward blessings are not to be despised; though they have ministrations of mercy in them; though they have in them much instruction and comfort and enjoyment; yet, the things that are not seen are mightier than the things that are seen. The empire of a man's life lies within him, and not outside of him. And it is victories over vulgarity; it is triumphs over pride; it is smitings against the rock and the gushings out of fountains in the wilderness; it is the dealings of the hand of the Lord inwardly with our thoughts and feelings and emotions, that most deserve to be signally noted, and heedfully perpetuated, by some memorial set up which testifies that "hitherto the Lord hath helped us." Such experiences of mercy should be followed by memorials to signalize them, because something of the kind is necessary to keep alive in the memory these special favors of God to us.

No one who has a constant succession of good fortune, keeps any ideal in his mind of the number of divine mercies of which he is the recipient. If God were to recount what he has done for us, it would seem as though our life were a golden chain, in which one golden link clasped another, every hour being a link, and every day lengthening the chain. And yet, we frequently feel as though our life was a desolate, barren life, because we have not noticed what the benefits of God to us really were; because we have taken no such heed as to be impressed that the Lord was guiding and defending us, and giving us victory. One mercy covers down another, like waves of the sea. One follows another, and

there seems to be but the one that is rolling in at just the present moment. We do not stop to think that the events which redeem this day, which fill this hour with peace, and which open the future to us, are special divine mercies. We attribute these things to ourselves. And so men become their own providence and their own God. They think for themselves; they will for themselves; they execute for themselves; they care for themselves; and they are accustomed to feel that the strength of their right-hand, and the wisdom of their head, hath multiplied the mercies of this life to them. Their life is full of events of mercy, only they do not heed them. They do not know that God is performing these marvels around about them. The unthought-of things are often full of beauty, and full of strangeness.

I sometimes think, of a night, that it is a sin to go into the house and leave God's glory flashing abroad in the Northern Lights, or in the stellar exhibitions in all the broad expanse above, without a witness—certainly without my witnessing them. I feel as though it were a stupidity to retire to sleep with all this amazing display going on. For, what are men's inventions and ingenuities compared with those astonishing developments which every summer's day shows us in the clouds, in the storms, and in frescoes of light and beauty? Every single day there is, in the silence of nature, and in the might of nature, enough to fill the human soul with joy and gratitude. But, while day tells it to day, and night repeats it to night, man sees but little of it.

And as it is in nature, so even more is it in providence. Not only are there a thousand things going on around about us which we do not heed, but there are a thousand things going on within us, which, for want of education, we do not mark nor recognize.

It is well for us, therefore, not only to specially note these things at the time, but to set up some sort of memorial to fasten them in the memory, that they may be of service to us by-and by. This may be done in a variety of ways. A few only I will suggest.

There may be kept a calendar of dates. It is astonishing how much one can preserve in this way with very little trouble. When traveling in Europe, I was so full of excitement and enjoyment that I had not time to keep a journal; so I just put down under each date one single word—the name of the city; or the name of the picture; or the name of the mountain; or the name of the pass; or the name of some person whom I had met; and now I can go back over a month's travels, and, though there are but these single words, that whole history starts up when I look at them. If you regularly take a memorandum book, at night, and think back through the day, and bring up before you what God has done for you, what he has shown you, what significant thing has happened, and put down the caption of it under the proper

date, you will be surprised to find what a calendar your book will become at the end of every year. Never was there a history written which was so full of wonder as any single life before me during a whole year. Never were there written things so improbable as many things that are all the time happening. Never were there events, conjunctions, circumstances, that had so broad and lasting an influence as the things which we pass by as matters of course. And it is worth one's while to keep some record of these things. There are some men who can keep a journal; but the men who can keep a journal to profit are born to it. Other men cannot. Therefore I do not exhort you to keep a journal. In the first place, there is not one man in a hundred that can keep a journal without knowing that somebody may see it. I tried it, and I know. A man who undertakes to keep a journal, and tells how wicked he is—does not he know that it may fall into the hands of somebody; and does not he smooth down the rough corners, and leave out some things? I tried to keep a journal, and I found that it was false all through, a little being added here, and a little being taken off there; there being a little too much light here, and a little too much darkness there. The shading was false from beginning to end; and I kicked it out of the house. I would not therefore advise you to keep a journal. No man is justified in turning himself inside out in a diary. It usually leads to a morbid introversion, and to a kind of conceit as well.

But this is very different from keeping a calendar of dates and events merely, which you shall understand, and no one else shall—which shall be made up of mnemotechnic symbols, by which you shall be able to recall from the waste of the past, events, judgments, mercies, which have been very significant—a book full of Eben-ezers, at each one of which you may stand and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me."

Then I have often thought it would be no unwise thing for one to make his house a kind of museum—to his own eyes at any rate, and to a certain extent to the whole family—of events and histories. In some of the German houses there is a charming habit of this sort. Wealthy men there build their houses for themselves and their children to live in; and therefore it is worth their while to do what it is scarcely worth our while to do. Instead of papering their rooms, or frescoing them in the ordinary way, they employ the ablest artists of their times to paint their walls with the most exquisite landscapes, which are to stand there for ages. And in these landscapes are representations of their own family here and there. Here, for instance, are the grand-parents; there are the children; and here are the friends and neighbors. And so, one has in his house a kind of memorial of his social relationships, and of everything significant in the family history. It is a most charming

idea if it be executed fitly. But I would not recommend to you any such custom as this, which is very expensive, and unfitted to our habits and manners. And yet, it is quite possible for one to have objects on his wall which shall answer very much the same purpose. A leaf here, an anchor there, or a little flower, plucked, dried, and hung in its proper place, may mark some significant passage in one's history.

This may be seen in castles. The man of the castle says, "Do you see those antlers? Do you see that frontal? I will give you a history of that hunting expedition." They are memorials which he has preserved of various experiences in hunting.

And why might not that be carried out further? When a child is born in the family, why might there not be hung up some memorial of that event which should never depart from the wall? Why might not every one that lives leave behind some significant thing that should ever bring him back to the memory of those who knew him when their eyes should chance to rest upon it? Why should not every dawning mercy have a star blazing from the wall, and saying to every one that looks upon it, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me?" Why should our houses be so barren of our own history? Why should we leave our eyes so entirely without the aid of interpreting symbols? I know not why a person's house should not become a kind of memorial of personal history.

Or, a journal might be made of the Bible. If one has a Bible of his own—and every one should have; if one has a Bible that he reads to the exclusion of every other one—and every person should have a Bible that he is as used to as he is to his father's garden or dooryard, so that he can readily put his hand on any chapter or verse in it; if one has such a Bible, which is his own property, he may register any significant event by marking certain texts or passages which are eminently suited to it. In that way he will form the habit of selecting passages of Scripture which are adapted to the various exigencies of this life. And how beautiful it is! If you keep a kind of register, so that the text refers to and is associated with the event, your Bible becomes a memorial. You are setting up all the way through it stones of remembrance, as it were. You are providing a record for your old age. And by-and-by, when you take down your Bible, and put on your glasses, and look back upon your past life, not only will it be the word of God, but you will find how the word of God fed you in the wilderness, strengthened you in sickness, and comforted you in circumstances of discouragement. How many things a man can record on the fly-leaves of his Bible which will afford him pleasure and profit in after life! And how precious that Bible will become to him when he has woven it into his experience as a kind of epitomizing of his life!

My old mother—my wife's mother—who has gone home to heaven, and who was over ninety years of age when she died, had, when I was in college, one of those little books called "Daily Food," in which there was a verse, a text, for every day of the year. She was a godly woman; and it was her habit, in this little "Daily Food," or calendar for every day in the year, to mark special occurrences and experiences, till it became, to her, a sort of transparent history of her children. There was this trouble that came on such a day; or there was that sorrow which was heard of on such a day; and along with the record of it was a text; and it oftentimes seemed almost like a revelation that such a text should have such a place. And she pinned her history with texts of Scripture in this way. Every important event connected with her life is doubtless noted there. I have no doubt that the day of my wedding is put down somewhere, with a text of Scripture pinned to it. There is something beautiful in this habit, as well as something most useful.

Or, one might, if blessed with means, take the occasions of God's helpfulness to him, and make them also occasions of charity. There are what are called "memorial windows" in churches. There are some in St. Ann's Church, which has just been completed in this city. Such windows are put in often, by affection, to be the memorial of a wife, or sister, or parent, or child, or friend. In the old country there are a great many of them. One of the most affecting things I ever saw in my life was in the church of the "Succoring" Virgin—that is, of Mary the Succorer. It was, I believe, in one of the French cities. The whole church was filled with tablets. Here was one of an officer, for three days deliverance, on such, and such, and such dates. It was a little marble slab let into the wall, inscribed with letters of gold. On inquiring and comparing dates, I found it was during the battle of Inkerman, at a time when the French army were in great danger. The man had been preserved; and when he came back, he put up in this church this tablet, recalling the mercy of God in sparing his life. Another inscription was, "My babe was sick; I called to the Virgin; she heard me; and my child lives." There was the tablet that celebrated that event. And I could not read these inscriptions without having tears fall from my eyes like drops from a spice bush when shaken in a dewy morning.

Now, everybody ought to have a church somewhere for himself—not a literal church; but some place where he can celebrate God's special goodness to him. Suppose, when God spares the life of your child, you should say (if you are blessed with the means), "I will make this significant by finding an orphan child, and setting apart that which shall take care of that child. I will make my benefaction to that child a perpetual memorial for the life of my dear child!" Or,

has God taken away your child—that sweetest girl? As you lay that child in the grave you will need no memorial of her. And yet the hand of God was in this event. And why should you not set apart something to signify your sense of God's presence with you in your affliction? Why should you not organize something that will endure?

Oh! if men should write their sense of God's goodness to them on the tables of living hearts, how in one's lifetime the whole community would be filled full of these significant instances of his gratitude, and testimonies of God's goodness to him, and his presence either in trials or in joys!

Besides these, there may be, for preëminent and most significant events in our history, days set apart. We have ecclesiastical days, of course; we have patriotic or national days, of course; we have our birth days, of course. Now, there are some days that are worth to us more than all others put together—days that each heart knows; days mysterious; days of sorrow; days of bitterness; days of transcendent joy; days of conflict; wondrous days that we can carry before God, and only God. And how worth one's while it would be to single out these days, as memorials, as it were, and set them up like a stone, and say, "Hitherto hath God helped me!"

I suggest but these few ways in which we may commemorate the important events of our history. You yourselves can see how they might be diversified and increased.

If such a course of noting God's dealings with us, if such a course of setting up memorials by way of recognising the hand of God in the shaping of our lives, be established and followed out, by-and-by we shall come to a habitual sense of God's presence with us. Not only will there be the record of these events, but there will be the impression educated in us that God is always with us. There will be the greater and the lesser mercies; but there will be a sense of continuous mercy, and continuous kindness. God will be with us in gifts every day, as well as in those special gifts which we mark as memorable. And lines of light will come out in every direction from our experience.

Most of us are in such a doubting state; we so fail to couple God's watch and care over us; we so fail to weave them into a sense of his universal and continuous providence, that we have the same battles to fight over and over again. We ought at least to come to that state in respect to God and his providence which we do in respect to our friends. You have friends that you trust. You have friends that you know, if you were sick, would not betray you. You have friends that you know would not desert you if you were unfortunate in business. You have friends that you know would, to the extent of their power,

stand by you in the dark hour. You have friends that you know would never fail to give you good counsel, and to sympathize with you in trouble. I pity the man who has not some "friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and that would go through thick and thin with him. But God, the best and most inexpressibly precious Friend, whose whole life is one prolonged, continuous benefaction to us, is the very one that we trust the least. And though a thousand dark hours have come to us, and God has helped us in every one of them, we have failed to carry along a faithful remembrance of them, and to say, "He that helped me hitherto, will help me in all time to come;" so that when the threat is in the heaven, we are just as much alarmed as though it had never been there a thousand times before. When a great sorrow is upon us, we act as though we had never known sorrow before, and had never before been delivered from sorrow. And in the midst of our various experiences of life, how we fail to believe that God loves us, that he is faithful to us, and that he will never leave us nor forsake us! If we had been accustomed to commemorate, by date and memorials, our past experiences, by-and-by we should have had the habit of looking up in such a way as to be able to go on, and, when trouble came, face it undaunted, and say, "The Lord lives; and while he lives I shall not suffer."

Hear the Psalmist in his deep grief:

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him." "O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordon, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayers unto the God of my life."

Such was his state of mind that, first came the grief, and then the recognition that God would succor him in his grief.

Such a day as to-day—the first Sabbath in the new year—seems to me to be a day eminently fit for the beginning of good habits and the nourishing of good tendencies. Christian brethren, why should we not begin this year with the resolution, in the first place, of looking back upon the last year, and singling out what remains to us of God's goodness? And why should we not recognize in some way or other our sense of gratitude to God? Why should we not set up some stone, and mark thereon, "Eben-ezer," and say, "Hitherto God hath helped me." There were many stones set up last year—memorials of anguish; testimonials of bereavements. Oh! that there were that Christian faith which should convert every sudden grief into a testimony of triumph, and, above all, a witness of God's fidelity! Has not God been good to you during the last year? Has he not been good to you in your family? Has he not relieved you from a thousand troubles when you

have called out to him? Has he not, many and many a time, during the past year, taught you to trust in him for his goodness? Has he not lifted your feet from many an obstacle? Has he not sweetened your life? Has he not made death itself less terrible to you? Has he not drawn near to you in ways most gentle, tender, rich, and soul-filling? Has he not proved himself to be just such a Friend as he promised to be? Nay more, has he not done exceeding abundantly more than you asked or thought? Has he not sent mercies that you had no reason to expect? Has he not averted judgments that seemed to break on your head? Has he not been unspeakably good to you during the past year? And is not to-day a day for memorials? Is it not a day for setting up some remembrance of God? Cannot we all, to-day, say, "Hitherto hath God helped me?" Let us begin this year with the purpose of heart to live more childlike, more trustful, more believing, more spiritual lives, than we have lived in times gone by. And let us see to it, as month after month rolls away, that we are becoming more observant, more conscious of God's very great bounties to us, and more grateful for them.

My dear friends, there is nothing that comforts and encourages me so much, as to have you tell me that my preaching has made you better. I am not unconscious of pleasure in knowing that you think that, of my sermons, this or that is an able one, or an intellectual one, or has elements of taste in it. Every faculty in me is alive and sensitive. But God is my witness, that in none of these things do I have the pleasure that I do in the testimony, "Your preaching has helped me bear my burdens. Your preaching has sustained me in my struggles inwardly. The truth that God has delivered to me by you has been blessed in making me better. I am better in my heart, and better in my house, and I am trying all the time to be better in my business." That is comfort.

Now, may God grant that in the year which is to come, I may be able to divide the word so that every one of you may have a portion in due season. May I be able to present to you God's everlasting truth so that it shall be a support to you in life, through life, and unto eternal life. Let me have your prayers that I may be able, through all this year, more searchingly to preach the truth, to bring it into relation to every inward faculty, and more and more richly endow you with a knowledge of the truth. Let me have your sympathy and your prayers, that in the year which is to come I may so preach the truth that you shall be nobler, more generous, more patient, more self-denying, and more thoughtful of other men's happiness. Oh! that God would make your houses more blessed houses than they have ever been before, in this year which is to come!

Are you in companionship? Let your companion bear testimony concerning you, at the end of the year, "I have never had so much comfort of his society as during this year." Are you living in family relations? Let every one in your family say of you, "His presence, this year, has been more full of light and sweetness than ever before." Are you in business relations? Let men say of you, "I never had such a savor of Christ in a man as I have had this year in him." Bear the precious name of Jesus with you into every part of your life; and in all the experiences which rise up to you in that blessed name, do not forget to be grateful at the time. And do not forget to have some souvenir and memorial by which you shall connect these various kindnesses of God, and be able, every year, to set up another testimony, and say, "Hitherto hath God helped me."

And by and by, when sickness comes, may God grant that you may go through all the region of the valley of the shadow of death saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me." When you come to the brink of the river, do not shrink. And as you go out of our sight, and reach the far shore, send back some airy voices to say still, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me." And when you rise and stand in Zion and before God, God grant that you may be able to say, in the presence of all the holy angels, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We acknowledge thee, Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—one God—our God—God over all, blessed forever. In thy immeasurable blessing we are comprehended, morning and night; and at all intervening hours, thy mercies are new, continuous, and inexpressibly rich. Thou it is that dost bring joy when joy is best, and dost bring sorrow when sorrow is nourishing and needed. Thou dost come to us with thy face unveiled and full of light; and thou dost hide thyself behind the clouds; and yet, when clouds are around about thee, justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. Our fathers have trusted thee, and thou didst not forsake them. We have trusted thee, and thou hast never forsaken us. Nor wilt thou cast off any that put their trust in thee. Though helpless, though erring, though sinning from day to day, thou wilt not cast them off. But thou wilt inspire them to greater diligence. Thou wilt awake sorrow and repentence in their souls. Thou wilt bring them back with confessions. Even if it be with stripes and chastisements, thou wilt bring them to a renunciation of their sins, and give them victory over them. Thou wilt work mightily in all those that have opened their hearts to thee, that thou mayest impart unto them of the Godhead, building up in them that which is given to them of thine own nature, bringing them more and more out from the dominion of the body and its powers, out from the dominion of the world that is visible, and bringing them more and more into the sacred presence of God and the invisible world, where all thy offices of spiritual power are performed. Thou wilt make them sons of God inwardly, and by a blessed affection of thy spirit thou wilt make them to know that they are thy children. Thou wilt breathe into them such affection that they shall be able to say, Our Father, and know that in the breathing of their souls they have the testimony of God that they are sons of God.

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may feel more that fatherhood, that everlasting relation of life, which thou hast shown by thy grace. Grant that we may feel that thou art a merciful Creator and Redeemer, dealing with us not only with mercy, but with that gladness of mercy which is everlasting—which hath been from the foundation of the world, and shall be to the end thereof. Grant that we may be brought into sweet relationship to thee as the all-inspiring and instructing Spirit of God.

May we have commerce with thee, Father, Son and Spirit. Grant to every one of us a special and personal relation to thee, and the knowledge of it, and all the joy of it. Grant that from day to day our life may be hid with Christ in God. And may there be between us and thee that secret, that unspoken, that dearest life of love which all love knows, and chiefly that which exists between our souls and thine. Give to us those moments of silence which no word can describe. Give to us those blessed moments of insight when all the glory of the invisible truth shall appear to us. Give us those hours on the mountain-top when thou art transfigured; and yet, make us willing to come down again and wrestle with sin and all the distress and labor of life.

Give us, we beseech of thee, more and more a blessed sense of the certainty of our salvation, not by reason of our effort, nor by reason of our strength, but from thy faithfulness, and from the boundlessness of thy love.

And so, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us these inward mercies, sanctifying to us all outward providences: all events which transpire, and which relate to us, in ordinary providences. Grant that they may every one bring forth some fruit in the soul, that we may grow rich inwardly; more truthful; more courageous in things that are right; more deep in our affection; more spiritual; more disinterested; and that we may have more faith, more hope, more love, and a calmer foresight into the coming glory of thy spiritual kingdom. So work in us mightily, both by thy providence and by thy grace.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all, this morning, that are in thy presence, and upon all that wish they were here, but are hindered by thy providence. We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant to the sick thy sustaining presence, and thy comforting care. If any are appointed unto death, show them that the way

of death is the way of God, and be thou with them to sustain them in all the way. If there are any that must needs give up their beloved into thy hands again, prepare them for the sacrifice; and grant that they may have faith, so that it may not seem to them that death is a devouring monster. May it seem to them the gate of heaven which thou, by the hand of love, dost open, and where thou dost quench earthly sorrow, and where thou hidest their beloved. And we beseech of thee, if there are any that are afflicted and mourning, that thou wilt give them more and more the treasure of the world to come, as less and less they have an earthly treasure. And if there are any that are walking solitary, or in loneliness of heart, while in the midst of multitudes, be thou with them—thou that wert alone, and yet not alone, because thy Father was with thee. Be thou the companion of every one that needs thee, and solace every heart that needs the strength and all the blessed influences of thy love.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless those who give thanks to thee in the memory of the past—who look back upon the year that is gone, and offer here their glad thanksgiving unto the Lord. We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all those that look forward upon this year with an earnest desire to make it the best year of their lives. May each succeeding year with us all be growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless those who are members of this church, and all those that are to-day to be united to us. We pray that it may not be alone an outward union. May it be a union also in things spiritual, true, deep and everlasting. And bless all those that to-day for the first time shall be joined to the visible and outward church of God. May they feel that they belong to the greater invisible church: to that great multitude that no man can number, that are sanctified in heaven: to that great company that cannot be enumerated on earth—men of faith and zeal of every name, speaking all languages, feeling one love, with all service, and with but one God. Grant that they may rejoice that thus their relationship is enlarged. And may they assume thy name and thy service with gladness, and rejoice in them, not counting them a bondage, but a liberty from bondage; not counting them a yoke, but a liberty from all yokes.

And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon those that are gathered with us who have not named thy name; who do not know thy spirit; who are walking yet in the midst of thy mercies with pride, with selfishness, with worldly-mindedness given up to the flesh and to its appetites. Oh! turn them from these baser things. Turn them from this lower life. Grant that they may behold how noble is the way of the Lord. May their feet be drawn into thy paths. May their hearts be sanctified by thy spirit. And may they this year, may they this day, begin that new life which shall never waver; which shall never go back; which shall grow stronger and purer and brighter unto the perfect day.

Bless, we beseech of thee, all the churches of this city; and may all those that preach thy word, to-day, be prepared to preach it in sincerity and in truth, and with power. Grant that they who go forth bearing precious seed weeping, may return speedily bringing sheaves in their bosom. Bless all the churches in our land. Unite thy people more and more in common labor, and common sympathy. And grant that the hand of charity may bring all together, however different they may be in their other relations. And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the efforts that are being made for the promotion of intelligence—upon all schools, and colleges, and seminaries of learning of every kind.

Bless those who are seeking to rear the young; those who are striving to enlighten the poor and the ignorant. And grant that everywhere this great nation may become intelligent, just, true, God-fearing, and man-loving. Let thy kingdom come everywhere, and the whole earth see thy salvation. Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

THE VICTORIOUS POWER OF FAITH.

"And the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith."—LUKE XVII. 5.

If you read the context, the whole passage seems, together with the answer of the Master, to be obscure. He had been saying, "It were better" for a man "that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." It was after this discourse that "the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." He replied, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

It does not seem as if he encouraged them. It does not seem as if he granted their request, or told them how they could improve. He seems, rather, to have rebuked them, by calling to mind how little faith they had, which they themselves knew, as was shown by their making application to him for more. Why they should have asked for faith in connection with the peculiar subject of forgiveness, or in connection with the subject of carrying one's self so as not to voluntarily injure one of God's little ones, by way of anger, or by way of implacableness, seems at first obscure; but it will become plain if you will take the interior line or clue of the connection, and not the exterior.

Our Saviour was wont so to time, and to word, and to illustrate his instructions, that they struck the inward moral sense of his hearers. He was preaching to his disciples the duty of overcoming passions and malignant dispositions. He was preaching to them the result of the doctrine of forgiveness and gentleness.

There was a certain moral sense in the disciples, as there is in all men, before which this injunction of the Saviour came with approbation. They felt that he taught them the right thing. And yet, the moment they undertook to think about it, as a principal thing in themselves, they began to say, "How can we forgive?" They thought of this one, and that one, and the other one; they recalled all their little

SUNDAY MORNING, Jan. 9, 1870. LESSON: LUKE X. 23—42. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 263, 115, 564.

animosities, and prejudices, and dislikes; and, though they were on the point of saying to themselves, "Well, I will obey," the thing itself seemed so impossible that their courage sank down, and they said inwardly, "We cannot do it." And they turned instinctively to the Master, and said, "Increase our power of doing this"; that is, 'Increase our faith"—by which is here to be understood that whole spiritual and eminent realm of power out of which comes the potency by which we change our nature, as we shall by-and-by see.

Equally strange seems the answer: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." In answering this request; in dealing with the state of mind out of which this special request grew—namely, moral despondency; the want of courage to undertake what was required—Christ said, "I command you to forgive utterly and continuously; and do you say, 'I never can do it; it is impossible for me to do it?' And do you ask me to increase your faith? I tell you, there is not only power in you to do it, but there is in you a power so great that you can make a total change." Or, in other words, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed—if you had the least particle of faith—you could do a thing that seems as impossible as to command that sycamine-tree to be rooted up and cast into the sea."

This was figurative language; and it was very powerful, being built upon the oriental imagination. Men at that time were more accustomed to such things than we are.

We have an analagous instance recorded in the ninth chapter of Mark. Our Saviour had just come down from the mount of transfiguration to the noisy, bustling world, that must have seemed to him serene and bright up there a few moments before; as a man comes out of his closet where he has had communion with God and heaven, and has experienced the very sweetness and joy of Christian hope, and steps forth into the world again, and comes in contact with its rude scenes and brute force. Our Saviour, having just come down from the mountain, found the great throng raging beneath, under the dominion of the passions.

"One of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spoke to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation! how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him; and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. And Jesus asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the

father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

It is just the same thing, precisely. Here is what Christ was asked to do—a great mercy; and he says, "This is possible if you only have faith enough." And the father said, "I have a little; but, Oh! give me enough more to make up what I lack." It is the heart's outcry. This case is more touching, but it is strictly analagous or parallel to that of the text, where the disciples were commanded to overcome these selfish and defective instincts. They saw that it was beautiful and right, and wanted to do it, but fell off before it, and said, "How can we?" and besought the Lord to *increase their faith.* And he said to them, "It is possible. It does not require so much faith as you think. Why, if you only had it to the amount of a grain of mustard-seed, there is such power in it that you could do not only that, but more difficult things." That is the spirit of the reply.

Men are just like the disciples. They hear religion preached; they believe the things that are said; and at times the truth glances through the exterior coating and strikes their moral sense. The ideal of the truth presented to them seems beautiful and sweet. In a white light it is to them. Thousands and thousands of men there are who hear the gospel preached every Sunday, and think there is nothing more beautiful than meekness, nothing more beautiful than humility, as they are presented to them. These are excellent qualities in their estimation. They believe in love. They believe in everything that is required in a true Christian character. It meets their approval. Their reason approves it. Their judgment approves it. Their taste approves it. Their moral sentiments approve it. And yet, when they ask themselves, "How shall I practice it?" they fall off instantly, and say, "It is not possible for me. I never can do it in the world."

Take gentleness. Here is a great rude-footed, coarse-handed man, gruff and impetuous, and careless of everybody, who sits and hears a discourse on the duty of being gentle; and as the various figures and illustrations are presented, he says, "Oh, how beautiful it is to be gentle!" But the moment he gets out of the church, he thinks, "The idea of my being gentle! I gentle? *I* gentle? Somebody else must do that part of religion. I never can. It is not my nature to be gentle."

Men have an ideal of what is right; and they believe in the possibility of its realization somewhere; but they do not think they are called to that thing. They do not believe it is possible for them.

There are avaricious men, I suppose, to whom, on hearing a discourse on benevolence in a church, it really shines, and who say, "Oh, this benevolence, though it is well nigh impossible—how beautiful it is!" But when it begins to come home to them, and the question is,

"Will you, from this time forth, order your life according to the law of benevolence?" they fall off from that, and say, "I cannot; it is impossible." And if Christ were present, and such men were under the influence of his teaching, they would turn to Him and say, "Lord, if this is true, it is true, and I must conform to it; but you must increase my faith. I must have some higher power. I cannot do it without." And Christ would encourage them, and say (not rebukingly, as it seems in the letter, but very comfortingly), "Do not think it is so hard. It is difficult, but not so difficult as you suppose. Do not think it to be so impossible that I must work a miracle for you before you can accomplish it." If you have faith, if you rouse up those spiritual elements that are in you, if you bring them under the illumination of God's own soul, and they are inspired by the divine influence, there is that power in you by which you can subdue all your lower nature, and can gain victories over every single appetite and passion, and every single evil inclination and bad habit. Let the better nature in man once come into communion with God, and it is mightier than the worse nature in man, and can subdue it.

You will fail of the secret and real spirit of this passage, if you do not consider its meaning as not only an interpretation, but as an interpretation which is designed to give courage and hope and cheer to those who desire to break away from bad tendencies and traits, and to rise, by a true growth, into the higher forms of Christian experience.

Let us consider, then, the practical aspect of this matter. When a strong nature is snatched from worldliness, and begins to live a Christian life, what are the elements of his experience, reduced to some sort of philosophical expression?

First, the soul is brought into the conscious presence, and under the recognized power, of the divine nature. This is with more or less distinctness in different individuals.

Consider how men are brought to a religious life. One man has been a very worldly and careless man, until, in the universal whirl of affairs, a slap of bankruptcy, like the stroke of waves against the side of a ship, smashes into his concerns, and he founders. He saves himself, but all his property goes to the bottom. And there he is, humbled, crushed, mortified. And it is a very solemn thing to him. But he never had any preaching before that gave him such a sense of the unsatisfactoriness of this life. He never before got a realizing sense of what a poor place the world was. He thought, "Let us build"—three tabernacles? Yes, "three hundred tabernacles. This is the place for me." I have heard men say, "This world is good enough for me; I do not want any better world"—till they came into great struggles and straits. Then they began to think that the world was not enough.

And if such men have had the advantage of Christian instruction, you will frequently see them, without ostentation, slide into the church. They have not had a very strong experience; but they say, "I have been living wrong, I have been living for wrong objects, and I am going to live a religious life." They do not know exactly what that means; but they disappear from the world, as it were, and reappear in the church, and begin to live a better life—though they have not found out all the meaning of it.

Another man was living very prosperously and happily. The fountain of his joy was in his companion; and God took her; and he knew no other way of joy. He settled himself to life and to business, and said, "I can open no new fountain." And the world was companionless and solitary to his inward nature. Outwardly it was companionable enough; but for his own peculiar personal self, that had lived and fed upon angel's food, nothing remained when the angel left. And he said to himself, "If there is anything in religion, now is the time for me to try it." And so that man entered upon a religious life.

Another man had no companion, but he had a little child. He had lived an unhappy life in his household; and by-and-by Death, which is the great divorcer, and has a right to divorce, took away his companion and his trouble, but left a dear child, into which he poured the whole of his heart and nature. That little girl was everything to him. She was his morning star—for he waked to think of her before any other one, and to frolic with her, and chat and prattle with her. And his last thought, as he left the house, was of her. And now and then she gleamed into his thoughts all day long in his business. And when the evening came, she was his bright evening star. And when he went home at night, and she greeted him at the door, he caught her in his arms, and inwardly thanked God.

She sickened; and he said to God, "Kill me, but spare the child!" And God took the child. And he said, "I have nothing left." He lay before God as the flax lies before the flail, and said, "Strike! strike! I am dead. I am cut up from the roots. Strike!" He would have died if he could, but he could not. Nobody can die that wants to. It is folks who want to live that die, apparently. And finding that he could not die, by-and-by he got up and crept into life again, and said, "What do I care whether I make or lose?" He had no longer any motive for laying up property. And so he said, "If there is anything in religion, I am going to try to get it. I shall die if I do not have something." And he gets religion to fill the great void and vacuum in his soul.

Others come into a religious life by the power of sympathy. They are drawn toward it by personal influence. They go into it because

their companions are going in. In a hundred such ways as these God's providence brings people into the beginnings of a Christian life. But when a man has once come into it, his very first experience, usually, whether he be exactly conscious of it or not, is the thought that he is brought into the presence of a higher Being—a higher Spirit—than he has been wont to think was near him. *God* begins to mean something to him. He may not know the divine attributes; he may not know the theological lore in respect to the Deity; but he begins to have through the day a certain impression of God present with him. And it is a real operative impression.

This sense of God's presence is that which is the beginning of faith in him. It opens the door for the divine power to inflame his soul; that is, for the divine mind to give strength and inspiration to the nobler and higher part of his mind—to his reason; to his whole moral nature; to that which is the best and highest in him. And no matter what may be the door of experience through which he came into the church, no matter what sort of an experience he had before he became a Christian, if he be true to himself. If when he has begun a Christian life he keeps the upper part of his nature (his reason, and his moral sentiments) open, so that God's light shines down into him, then he has the beginnings of a divinely inspired faith; that is to say, the recognition of great truths and forces that are supersensuous, and that lie in the direction of invisible and higher forms of truth.

By the enlarging, by the education, by the inspiration of a man's nature, in this direction, the beginnings of victory are planted. And now, all the forces of a man's nature, and all the foregoing habits of his life, beginning here, will soon be so changed as to come into agreement with his higher feelings, which will be excited by the inshining of God's soul.

Men think it is mysterious; but it is not mysterious. I can give you an analogue that will show it to you precisely—only the truth is far greater, far richer, far more glorious and minute, than the illustration.

Take a person of some degree of sensibility—a young woman, for instance—who has been living in a vicious circle of people. Her father and mother—emigrants—died on landing. She was of good stock, and had strong moral instincts; but she was a vagrant child, and was soon swept into the swirl of poverty and vice. Although too young to become herself vicious, yet she learned to lie, and steal, and swear—with a certain inward compunction—until by-and-by some kind nature brought her out of the street, and out of the den, and into the asylum. And then, speedily, some childless Christian woman, wanting to adopt a child, sees her, and likes her face and make, and brings her home to

her house. This is almost the first time she has had any direct commerce with real truth and real refinement; and at first she has an impulse of gratitude, and admiration, and wonder; and in the main she is inspired by a sense of gladness and of thankfulness to her benefactress. But as she lives from day to day, she does not get over all her bad tendencies. Because she has come to live with and to be the daughter of this woman, she does not get over the love of lying, and tricks, and dirtiness, and meanness, and littleness. The evil does not die in an instant from her nature. Yet there is the beginning of that in her which will by-and-by overcome it. There is in her a vague, uninterpreted sense of something higher and better than she has known before. And it is all embodied in her benefactress. She hears her sing, and hears her talk, and sees what kindnesses she does to others, and how she denies herself. And this child, that has never been taught to do anything except from a selfish motive, that has lived where men were like so many animals, clawing and pawing for themselves, sees that there is such a thing as kindness on principle, and kindness that is done at the expense of one's own wishes. The inference of these things works more and more on the better part of her nature; and she begins to take hold of herself, and to wrestle with her own bad tendencies. And if she be, as I have supposed her to be, a child of strong original moral nature, she will, in the course of a year, be almost free from the taint of corruption; almost free from deceits; almost free from vices. And it will be the expulsive power of new love in her soul that will have driven out all this vermin brood of passions. As long as she is in the presence of this benefactress, she will feel streaming in upon her nature those influences which wake up her higher faculties, and give them power over her lower faculties.

When men are brought into the Christian life, and they begin to come into communion with God, the higher part of their nature receives such a stimulus that it has power to dominate the lower part—to control pride; to hold in restraint deceits; to make men gentle, and mild, and sweet, and forgiving, and noble, and ennobling. The direct influence which the spirit of God has upon the human soul, is to develop the good and expel the evil tendencies that are in it.

There will, then, follow from this beginning of a divine life in the soul, the suppression of many deeds; the modification of bad habits; the restraint of inclinations respecting the relations and interests and uses of different parts of the mind. There are too many of them to mention now. They are innumerable, as it were.

There will be a change in our outward conformities to society; to institutions; to new duties. There will be the acceptance of standards of morality which before we have not accepted. There will be the lay-

ing aside of this and that sin which were before recognized as sins, but were yet permitted.

But important as these things are, they are but auxiliaries. There is this one work which the new life begins to accomplish—namely, the readjustment of the forces of the soul. It changes the emphasis. It changes the point of power. It determines whether the soul shall, with all its forces, work downward toward the selfish and sensuous, or whether by the force that there is in the lower nature, it shall work upward toward the spiritual and the love element—toward purity and duty.

For, the entrance of God's spirit into the soul, the *regenerating process*, as it is called, the beginning of a new life, does not destroy nor eradicate any constitutional element. When the doctor says, "You have been all running down, but I will take you in hand and restore you; I will renovate you and make you just as good as new; you will be a new man when you have gone through the course that I shall prescribe for you," he does not mean that you will have any other legs and hands, or any other organs. He simply means that they will be so repaired and regulated that it will be as if they were new. And when it is said that a man shall be a *new creature*, it is not meant that literally there will be any added faculties in him, or that there will be any old faculties taken out of him. He was made right to begin with. The mischief is not in our creation, but in the use which we put ourselves to. We use ourselves badly. And when we enter upon a Christian life, it is a life which teaches us to use every faculty in ourselves as God meant that it should be used. There will be no change of any constituent element in us. Characters will change. The power will be transferred from the bottom to the top. All the passions of our animal and secular nature will be brought into the service of love, and purity and truth.

But, as no abstract statement ever amounts to as much as a concrete example, consider some cases which we have in the Bible. Take Peter, for instance. What a stalwart, impetuous man he was! Bold, rash, headlong, and changeable, was he. It seems at first as though a man who is bold should not be changeable; but it is very often the case that he is. At any rate, it was so with Peter. And how, when you come to trace his life later on, the power of grace had cured all the unfavorable tendencies of his nature, without taking away his impetuosity, or his courage! How his nature had been regulated, so that he is said to have been in his later days one of the noblest of the apostles!

Even more familiarly, we know the process in the case of John. He was one of those irritable men that you see sometimes—men that are not boisterous; that are very serene, very tranquil, apparently, but that, when you know them more intimately, you find, and are surprised

to find, are as quick as gunpowder, and go off with a flash. They are irritable, although there is this exterior softness. John was the one that disputed as to which should be first. He was ambitious. He was the one that, when they were going into a village, was angry at the villagers because they did not do obeisance to the Master, and prayed that fire might be brought down from heaven to consume them—a mode of controversy which has been a favorite one ever since. It settles an antagonist very quick to *burn him up!* Although John originally had this irritableness, he afterwards became the world's ideal of gentleness, and sweetness, and love. What a transformation that was, from the angry burning John, of the earlier period of his life, to that inspired John, of which the world has never heard enough, and is likely to never tire of hearing.

The life of Paul was still more open before us. He was naturally a leader—and as much so after his conversion as before. He was one of those men that go ahead, not because they are ambitious, but because they cannot help themselves, any more than cork or wood can help coming to the surface of water. Some men lead because they are made to lead, preëminently. And Paul was such a man. He was a man of immense conscience, immense pride, and immense combativeness. He was converted. His conscience did not diminish; his pride did not shrink; his combativeness did not flow out. All those great elements remained in him. Before he was converted, his conscience worked with the malign feelings. Afterwards, his conscience worked with the benevolent feelings. Before he was converted, his pride worked for selfishness. After he was converted his pride worked for benevolence. Before he was converted, his combativeness worked for cruelty. After he was converted, it worked for zeal.

Look at his own description of himself. He says, in Acts, the twentieth chapter, beginning with the ninth verse,

"I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did."

I will warrant it. He never thought he ought to do a thing that he did not try to do it.

"And many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

Such was Paul before he was converted, according to his own description of himself. Now hear Paul give an account of himself afterwards, when he told what he did as a Christian, as contained in the second chapter of 1st Thessolonians, beginning with the seventh verse:

"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember,

brethren, our labor and travail; for the laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God, also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe; as ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God."

Now, in both cases he was doing the same thing. When he went to Damascus, he was attempting to promote religion. He was putting down the disciples of Christ in order to make them conform to what he believed to be God's service. And afterwards, when he espoused the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and worked to build it up, he had precisely the same end in view. But now he was working with the other end of his mind. At first it was pride and conscience acting with the malign feelings. Afterwards, it was pride and conscience acting with the benign feelings. And his earlier self and his later self were perfectly antagonistic. His unconverted nature was antithetical to his converted nature. The spirit of love developed itself into ascendancy; but conscience was strong as ever. It was then justice and truth, whereas, before, it had been error and cruelty; and honor and equity never had a more noble exponent than Paul after his conversion. All his life he was using precisely the same faculties; but in one case he used them in direction of love, and in the other case he used them in the direction of self.

Paul was so proud, in the early period of his life that it was dangerous for one to oppose him. Afterwards he was just as proud; but now his pride was self-respect. It was a pride directed and leavened by love; it was a pride working for love, as well as in the spirit of love. There is not in literature another instance of such superlative egotism, such superb egotism, such acceptable egotism, as there is in Paul's writings. He never sees a person, or meets an experience, or thinks a thought, that he does not tell you how he felt about it. It is "I," and "I," and "I," right straight through from beginning to end. That which made him so despotic and intolerent before his conversion, and afterwards so sympathetic and gentle, was his intense *I-ness*. And when he identified himself with the truth of God, he, as it were, took the whole of it into his personality. So that the same pride which characterized him before his conversion characterized him afterwards. It was not destroyed when his nature was changed. The difference was that in one case it worked malignly, and in the other benignly.

When, therefore, a man enters into a Christian life, not only does he come into communion with God, but his nature is newly directed. He begins to make the upper, the truly spiritual, the love-bearing elements in him dominate over the others. No man can change his faculties, any more than he can change his bodily organization; and yet, his disposition may be changed! Every single wrong element in a

man may be subdued; but it requires that he should be in earnest, and use the right influences. There is not one single sin that a man can not break away from. There is not one single evil habit that a man cannot correct. There is not one single perversion of a man's nature that he cannot rectify. There is not one tendency of selfishness, of passion, of lust, or of avarice, that cannot be overcome.

It is not necessary that a man should go into church to be just a little better. There is that in every man which, if he will only let God quicken it—if he will only let God shed the vivific influence of his Spirit upon it—is competent to give him complete possession of himself in righteousness. It may be very hard for a lazy man to become active; but he can do it. It may be very hard for a proud man to become humble; but he can do it. It may be very hard for a selfish man to become truly benevolent; but he can do it. It may be very hard for a sly man to become open and frank; but he can do it. It may be very hard for an insincere man, full of appearances and specious conduct, to become sincere and straight forward; but he can do it. It may be very hard for a man who is critical, sharp, and uncharitable, and lances his neighbor's faults while he spares his own, to become as considerate of others' feelings and reputation as of his own; but he can do it. You can do anything. There is nothing that is wrong in the human soul that cannot be put right. And you have the power to put it right, provided you are clothed with the Spirit from above; provided you take into your hands the implements that come from the armory of God. There is power in the Lord Jesus Christ for a perfect victory over the flesh, the appetites and the passions, and to bring you into the supremest triumph of the spiritual life.

Let no man, then, coddle his faults, and say, "I was made as I am, and it is not possible for me to be an eminent Christian. That is another question—how far it is possible for you to be an *eminent* Christian, in the sense of experiencing original thoughts and feelings, and bearing into the world a new tide of ideas; but in so far as the rectification of your own nature is concerned, God has given you power to govern yourself. There is no man who wants to do it enough to say, "Lord, increase my faith," that cannot do it. There are a great many that will not do it if they do not ask, and do not want to; but there are a great many men who will make shipwreck of their souls because they were never morally incited to look toward better things. They go into a sort of calculation with themselves, as to how far away from old sins it is necessary for a soul to go, just to be saved, and how near to them one can go and yet be saved. They do not want to make a total renunciation. There are a thousand fibres yet that hold them to the world.

Consider, here, how strong that figure of our Saviour's is. I suppose most of you have never taken up a tree. If you have, and it was of any size, you know that a tree, which looks as though it were one stem growing out of the ground, is found to have, the moment you undertake to transplant it, five hundred stems under ground. Here is one great root, that you never knew anything about, by which it anchors itself; and there is another there; and there is another yonder. You take off the ground and cut away this root, and then shake the tree, and it stands just as though nothing had been done. You remove the earth and cut off that long anchor-root; and then you say, "Now it will come." No, it will not come. You dig again—a little impatient—with pick and spade, and you find that here is another root, and there is another root; and as you cut them off you say to yourself, "Will it *never* come up?" And you pull at it again. No, it will not come. And you get quite vexed, and you have an opportunity to get good-natured again; for it does not come. By and by you say, "Well, I will see what is the matter"; and with the pick you strike under, and under, and under, until all at once, *thump*, you hit a great tap-root. That sheds new light on the subject. Here are all these surface roots that you have uncovered and cut; and finding that then the tree will not budge, you dig far under, and to your surprise find this tap-root; and with one powerful, sidelong blow you cut that off, and the tree falls over, and the victory is gained!

Now, that is very much like transplanting a man. There are ever so many roots that hold him down. All the surface is full of them. They run great distances in every direction, dividing, bifurcating, twisting under stones, and around all sorts of obstructions. And when all these surface roots have been cut he is not half ready to transplant. You must dig under and under, till you come to the tap-root, that was far out of sight, and that nobody suspected, and cut that; and then you can transplant the man.

The Lord says, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you can say to this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the roots, and cast into the sea." Hard as it is to transplant the tree of your soul, difficult as it is to sever the roots that hold it down, the Master says, "There is power to do it." However many faults you may have, that branch their roots out in every direction, and difficult as it is to transplant them by the ordinary instrumentalities; nevertheless, faith in the soul will give you power to pluck them up by the roots, and cast them from you, or transplant them to better soil, where they will grow to a better purpose.

And no man who is entering the precincts of a higher life; no man who is drawing near to the twilight of his true manhood; no man who

begins to know that he is a son of God, and begins to hear voices whose meaning he can scarcely discern, and begins to recognize the call of God, and to respond to that call by beginning to live in obedience to his higher instead of his lower nature—no such man ought to say, "I can be a Christian a little way." My brother, you can be a Christian *all* the way. There is nothing in you that, if you have started on the Christian course, is so bad that you cannot overcome it by the grace of God. It is your privilege to receive power from on high that shall give your will such firmness, and your judgment such directness, and your moral feelings such predominance, that you shall be able to overcome any passion or appetite. Whatever may be your sin, whatever may be your lust, whatever may be your vice, it is in your power to correct it. No man should in a cowardly way enter upon a Christian life, saying, "I can do some things, and I can live better than I have been living." You can live *victoriously*. God gives you the power—and he will refresh and invigorate that power in every man's soul—to overcome every snare, every delusion, every passion and appetite, every thing that is wrong in you, and to become perfectly victorious.

I preach, not simply a free gospel, but a *victorious* gospel. I preach a gospel that has been full of victories and noble achievements, but that has not yet begun to show what its full power and what all its fruits of victory are to be. No one, then, who has been trying to overcome his faults, need despair.

I have a door with a patent lock, which was designed to keep burglars out, and which I know will, because it keeps the owner out a good deal of the time! I go and put in the key, and push, and wait for the bolt to fly back with a click—for only when that is heard is it worth while to attempt to open the door; but it does not come. The door now and then has the sulks; and I have sometimes stood, and stood, and stood, working at that lock. There was no help for it. It was a choice between staying out and opening that door. I have had to try perhaps twenty times before I could just exactly hit that little slide inside. And I have taken hold of the handle, and pushed, and pushed, and pushed, and said, "I am bound to get in; I *must* get in; I *will* get in." And after infinite attempts, at last I hear the welcome click. If I had given up after a few trials, I might have found my lodging where I could; but I said to the door, "You have got to come open: you *shall* come open;" and I did get it open, and got in.

Did you ever lose the key to a trunk or drawer, and go round and borrow keys of your friends to open it with? And have you failed to find one that would unlock it? And have you said, "I *must* get it open. My money is in there, and I will pick the lock, or break it, if I cannot do any better?"

Oh! if in the soul there was the same diligence; if you came up to a virtue and said, "I know it is in here, and it shall come out; I will try this key, and that, and I will not be baffled; and I will bring in this one, and that one, and the other one, to help me; and if there is no other way I will play burglar—for it has got to come out;" your success in right living would be certain. Did you ever see a drawer that did not come open when you went to it with such determination?

But suppose you had sat down before your bureau, and said, "*Do* come out drawer—*please* come out!" You would have acted as Christians do when they stand before virtues and graces, and say, "I wish I was humble." No, you do not wish you were humble either! "I wish I could get over my self-indulgence. I sometimes think I will." Is that the way the man talks who is pursuing a Christian life? Is that the meaning of "Strive (agonize) to enter in"?

If there is anything in this world that is worth having, it is a nobler virtue than you have now; it is liberty in the better part of your soul; it is dominion over those things which are sensuous, wicked, devilish, in your nature. And if you sought for these things as you seek for hid treasure, or for treasure that is lost, you would be sure to obtain them.

A man has lost a title-deed, or some paper that would decide a suit in his favor, rather than against him. And with what alacrity does he search for it! How does he go through the house in quest of it! "My dear, have you seen that roll of paper with a great red seal on it?" "What was it? A newspaper?" "No, *no!* not a newspaper. I shall lose a suit if I cannot find it." And she searches in every drawer, and every trunk, and every closet, and even under the carpets. Both of them search night and day, going over the same places twenty times, saying, "Maybe I did not look thoroughly." And they cannot give it up. They wonder what on earth has become of that paper. "Those servants are always doing some mischief—is it possible that they have carried it off?" The man almost cries, he wants it so much. He *will* have it, so much depends upon it. And at last he finds it, and he says, "I would rather have had my house burned, than not to have found this paper."

Now, when men search for victorious virtues in their souls, as they would search for an important legal document, do you suppose they will be saying, "Perhaps others may be able to live a good Christian life, but I cannot"? You *can*. And when you want true religion; when your soul hungers for it, you will find it. When you cry out for God, he will cry out for you. There was never a heart homesick for heaven, that heaven was not homesick for it. Never did a soul long for God, that God did not long for that soul. And there is not one

thing that you need—not one single victory over wrong; not one single virtue; not one single triumph of a better desire over a baser one—that if you put into it faith, Christ does not say to you, "If you have as much as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall pluck out the worst thing, and cast it into the sea."

Oh, blessed promise! oh, sweet revelation of truth! oh, divine and ever-to-be-adored declaration of mercy! that there is stored in every one that victorious power by which we are able to subdue the enemy that is in us, and put down the animal, and rise into the spiritual, and become worthy to be called the children of God.

Have you tried this, Christian brethren? Abandon all half-way measures, and try it heartily, earnestly, thoroughly. Speak to your children, and comfort them, and show them the way to these victories. Speak to those who are just beginning a Christian life, and encourage them to persevere.

I know it is hard to turn a life that is misdirected into right channels; I know it is hard to change wrong feeling to right feeling; but it can be done. And the victory will pay for the struggle. Not those victories which come easiest are most sweet to us.

When through the battle, through the night and its watches, through marches over stream and through morass, and through loss upon loss, Sherman at last saw glimmering the spires of the far off city on the Gulf, do you not think all the toil and labor of the great way was repaid by that one single first sight? The march and the battle were behind him. The hardship was over, and the victory was in his hand.

When we draw near to that other and better city whose bright domes flash God's eternal light, and over whose battlements come sweet voices to us to-day, saying, "Come—come," one single look, one waft of its perfume, one echo of its joy, will repay us for every tear, for every sorrow, and for every discouragement.

Then gird up your loins, dear brethren. Take a new lease of life. Form a higher purpose for the future. Have more courage—not courage which comes from a consciousness of your own strength, but that courage which comes from the certainty that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Oh, children of the living God, my Father's children, my brothers and sisters, heirs with me to an eternal inheritance! let us take hold of hands to-day, with a new covenant, with new sweetness of love and joy, and begin to live for the heavenly land.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice that we walk in no strange way when we seek thee, our Father. Not so familiar to our footsteps was our father's house on earth as now to our feet is our Father's house in heaven. We have sought thee through storms and through sunshine. We have sought thee through sorrow and through joy. We have sought thee in weakness and in strength. And thou hast never been shut off from us. When thou didst hide thy face, it was only as we sometimes hide our face from our children that they may be the happier in our coming again. Thou hast dealt with us very tenderly. Thy providences have been very gentle. The things which we have mourned we have not understood; and that which seemed as rudeness to us was no rudeness but mercy. For thou dost work by light and by darkness alike. Joys and sorrows are both the elements of love and mercy in thine hand. Thou dost mingle affairs so as to work out in us a noble manhood. It is not to bless us now but to bless us forever, that thou art working in us. It is not to make us happy but to make us so good that we cannot but be happy. And thou art preparing for to-morrow by sacrificing to-day. Thou art eternally working the best things for the best ends. Thou art rearing us out of the animal kingdom, and bringing us through manhood into the sonship of God, and preparing to exalt us into the spiritual realm, and to make us worthy of crowns and of sceptres and of thrones and of liberty and dominion forever and forever. Rebuke in us, therefore, O thou beneficent Father, all vulgarity, all groveling dispositions, all pride, all self-indulgence. We confess that we sin by selfishness, and by every evil passion. We confess that we are continually prone to revert to earth, and to find our joy in things sensuous. We confess that every single day we disturb the harmony and purity of our souls. Every single day we need thee, both for patience, and for strength, and for forgiveness, and for cleansing, and for inspiration, yea, and for hope. We are most bold in audacity at times, and thrust ourselves into great trouble; and then straightway we repent, and are utterly discouraged and desponding, and are disposed to cast away our hope, and to cease every endeavor for a better life. We need thee, O Lord, on both sides—above us and beneath us, before us and behind us, to be all to us—to be all in all.

We rejoice that thou art, and hast been, gentle and loving; and that thou hast taken thy very titles from the universality and continuance of thy gentleness and love. And we pray that we may be, by the mercy of God, led to repentance, and by the gentleness of Christ persuaded to a nobler life.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant this morning, the ministration of thy mercy, adapted to the special wants of each one in thy presence—to the wants of the young, and to the wants of the old; to the wants of those who are in the midst of vehement struggles, and to the wants of those who are outcast, and who require divine help; to the wants of all that are in danger of self-indulgence. Grant that the consciousness of the sinfulness of their hearts may keep none from the confidence of thy love this morning. May every one have the sweet assurance that God is interested in him, and that God loves him, and that God is drawing him, and is overcoming sin in him, and healing the desire of sin in him. And may every one be disposed to come back to the best Friend that even sin has in the soul. Grant that every one may remember that for him, while yet an enemy, thou didst give thy Son, and that Jesus died. And we pray that there may be hope, not to presume in sin, but to assail the mightiest sin, and to break it by the power which God shall give to us.

Grant, we pray thee, that those who are in responsibility for others, ruling over them in the household, or in any of the avocations of life, may be like thee. May they be to those that are under them, what thou art to them—as generous; as gentle; as forbearing; as patient; as disinterestedly seeking their welfare.

We beseech of thee that we may be diligent in business, and yet fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; doing with our might what our hands find to do; remembering that the night cometh when no man can work, and that what we do we must do presently.

We beseech of thee, that thou wilt grant that those who are young, and are entering upon life, may enter with a more resolute and virtuous manhood than those who have

preceded them. May there be none who shall enter upon life as upon a playground, to seek there their own amusement and enjoyment. May every one remember his calling. May every one put high before him the great enterprises and duties of life. May all gird up their loins; and, because they are young and strong, may they go forward in the service and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all those who are in darkness—for there are many upon whom thy hand has rested heavily. Comfort their sorrows. Grant that bereavements may not betray their confidence in thee. The more they suffer, the nearer may they press to the all-sympathizing heart of God. Draw near to any that are friendless and in perplexity; to any that are overmatched by their struggles in life; to any that are overmastered by temptation. But thou, O God, art full of mightiness for others as well as for thyself; and thou wilt not suffer them to be tempted beyond what they are able to bear. If they come to thee ingenuously, thou wilt open a door to them of escape. And we commend the tempted to thee, that thou mayest succor them. May they be willing to be succored.

And we pray that thou wilt bless the outcast, the poor, the ignorant, the wanderers—those that do not know better than to live in hatreds, in strifes, in every evil passion. Grant that we may not turn inhumanly away from them, as if they were not of us; as if they did not belong to our households; as if they were not men like ourselves; as if they were not parts of the great family to which we belong. Grant that those who go forth especially to seek them, to preach to them, to relieve them and to succor them, may themselves be filled with the Spirit of the Master. May they have, also, the blessing of God resting upon their fidelity. May none be weary in well-doing. May none turn back from well-doing because they find among the poor and needy ingratitude, intractableness, indocility, and all manner of evil requitings. May they, too, bear men's sins and carry their sorrows, as Christ bore our sins and carried our sorrows. And so may they learn to follow Christ through good report, and through evil report, and exalt the conception of a Christian manhood in the eyes of men.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt fill thy people more and more with the fruits of righteousness. Make them more lovely. Grant that men may behold in them the evidences of true religion.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless, not ourselves alone, but all the Churches that are gathered to-day of every name. Strengthen all that are called to speak the truth, and enable them to speak it in love. And may all that listen receive seed into good and honest hearts. Grant that the blessing of God may go forth with all the preachers that, throughout this great land to-day, are lifting up their voices and bearing testimony of the truth.

Grant that all schools, and all colleges, and all labors for civilization, may have thy blessing.

Pour out thy Spirit upon the nations of the earth. If they have heard thee calling in the heavens, and are rising up and blindly following, send thou guides for them. May knowledge prepare the way.

O Lord, wilt thou fulfill the promises which respect the whole world. Bring down the high hills, and lift up the valleys. Make the rough places smooth, and the crooked places straight. And grant that all the earth may see thy salvation. Which we ask for Christ Jesus sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word which we have spoken, and make it a living word to every needing heart. Give power to thy servants to preach it. Give more power to thy people to live according to thy truth. Bless us while we sing once more; and go home with us; and at last bring us home to thee. Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

THE PEACE OF GOD.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—PHIL. IV. 7.

This is only one of the expressions found abundantly in the New Testament, which describe the Christian's experience in the most attractive language, and contribute to it elements which are not practically to be found in the ordinary Christian life. Such language as this stirs the imagination. It attracts our desire vehemently. But it seldom is answered in any development or experience in practical life.

If by *peace* is meant simply a negation of painful excitement, almost all dull and phlegmatic natures have that; but surely, this is not what is meant. Is there no peace for acute vitality? Is there no peace for strong and active natures? Is there no peace for men and women through whose bosoms roll tides of passionate emotion? Is peace only a gentle fatigue, or soul-sleep, after a stormy life? Is it ashes when the flame is burned out? Or, is there a quality of peace which goes along with energy; with overflowing fullness of emotion; with acute sensibility; with great energy and power? Is disturbance the result of not knowing how to use our superior feeling and faculty? And is there a divine influence and a divine schooling that shall so teach men how to use all their nobler powers that they shall come into a perfect harmony, and cease to be exhausting or rasping, and become peaceful? This latter, without doubt.

If that be so, what becomes of the practical experience of Christian men, and even of very good Christian men? How many of you can claim that this experience has ever been yours, and that you have had that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding?"

Joy is another thing. That may spring from single faculties, and from very imperfect ones. It belongs to a lower state. There is a joy—for that is the term by which we signify constitutional pleasure—arising from the exercise of any one of our appetites or passions. He that eats pleasant food has joy of taste. He that listens to pleasant sounds has joy of hearing. He that looks upon pleasant things has joy of sight. He that has a lower form of affection has joy. Joy is

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merely the pleasure which any faculty derives from its constitutional action; and it may exist in very great rudeness and very great imperfection.

Men are so little addicted to the finer shades of religious experience, that frequently they do not discriminate between mere excitement and joy, and almost never between peace and joy, although peace is transcendently higher than anything that we are accustomed to understand by *joy*.

We shall best compass our end in explaining this matter, by taking a view of the conditions of Christian experience as they exist in God's providence in this life, and as they are recognized in the New Testament.

It is clearly taught that there is a very long gradation in Christian experience—that no man becomes a whole Christian all at once, by a miracle of the Holy Ghost. No man is born into the kingdom of God full fledged, full-songed, victorious. We are born into God's kingdom little children. We have to go through a process of development and education in religious things, as little children in this natural life are obliged to go through successive stages of education and development. Christians are, therefore, widely separated from each other in quantity and quality of moral excellence and of experience. We find in the New Testament the distinct recognition of *babes*. Some are children. Some always will be. We find the apostle making express provision for the *weak*, as if they were to remain weak. Some men are always in struggle. Some have alternations of peace and disturbance. Some have a continuous flow of peace and tranquil joy.

Now, are these different degrees or kinds of experience mere matters of chance? No. There is a regular process or gradation, beginning with moral excitement and turbulence at the earlier period of Christian life, and progressing toward peace, as one passes through the educatory stages, and comes into the higher element of a true spiritual life.

The struggle of life is that struggle which is eminent as we are overcoming the wisdom of the body, and the impulses of the body, and substituting in their stead the wisdom of the spirit and the control of the spirit, under the divine influence.

The practical mistake which men are liable to commit, therefore, is the ascription to every part of Christian life of the experiences which are properly predicated of particular parts of it. No man can have perfect peace at the beginning; that is, unless his whole previous life has been in some sense a religious and Christian discipline, so that the work which ordinarily takes place in the heart in conversion has by God's grace been in part, as it were, carried on before—for I believe that

there is a great deal of Christian life which is provided for beforehand in Christian communities.

If a man were just born into school, his teacher would smile at him if, while he was yet floundering in his Greek verbs and roots, he should say, despondingly, "Oh, sir! where is that pleasure of learning that you talked to me about?" We do not generally find the pleasures of learning when we are studying the grammar. What would you think of a little child that should expect the amenities and delights of literature when learning the alphabet? That is not the point of literary culture where pleasure comes in.

And the peace which comes from Christian life does not come with the alphabet. That is not the point at which to look for it. It belongs to Christian experience, but it belongs to a later stage. It is one of the signs of ripeness, but not of blossoming. That *peace which passes all understanding* is the highest and the most secret stage of experience. Once reached, and the soul is in the land of Beulah; and from the delectable mountain henceforth it will look over upon the celestial city; and at the hush of evening it will hear, or will think it hears, those voices of the blest which rise in endless warbles over the city of God, and of which, I sometimes think, all sweet earthly sounds are only the echoes, or, as it were, wandering and lost sounds which have dropped down through the tumult of this lower sphere, confusedly, and yet have not quite lost their sweetness.

Let us, then, look at some of the qualities of the soul's highest and latest experiences of Christian life. Let us look, in other words, into that secret life which we cannot declare; which is unspeakable, and yet is a reality; toward which every one of us should aim; into which some of us have by this time begun to come; and into which all may more or less come.

1. As by discipline, by devotion, by a holy volition, one rises into the higher realm of experiences, it will be found that his pleasures are less and less derived from the ordinary and material sources of life. We live so much in the body, and by it, that it is not strange that in the beginning the experiences of our life should be external; that our earlier experiences should be so largely colored by physical circumstances. The buoyancy of life, the joy of the eye, and the ear, and the hand, the sportive enjoyments and animal life of childhood, are perhaps the most beautiful instances of mere material enjoyments.

I do not undervalue God's goodness as shown to us through the flesh because I say that this is the lowest form, and that as we rise higher we shall put it into a relatively different position. A growing sense of the superiority of the invisible world and qualtiies; the rising up in the soul of a distinction between thoughts and things, between

qualities and substances; and the gradual learning to derive pleasure, not from the abundance of the *things* which we possess, but from the abundance of the *moral elements* which we possess—this is one of the early and unequivocal signs of a truly spiritual development.

To reach this state, the imagination must of course have been cultivated, so as vividly to keep the invisible in suggestion. No man that is without imagination can rise to the highest forms of Christian life, because we have to forget the visible; and by the power of some faculty in us, we are to live as in the presence of the unseen. That is the very function of the imagination; and I think those parents wrong their children who in early life bring them up to be so practical and matter-of-fact that they deny all culture of the imagination. Childhood is full of this quality, and it is not to be restrained, although it is to be educated and directed. But children, although they are not likely, in our day, to be bewitched by fairy tales, nor by fables, nor by fictions or stories, are being prepared by these very imaginary disciplines which they receive in their early literature, for that higher function of the imagination which becomes, in alliance with moral qualities, what the Bible means by *faith*. For, "faith is the evidence of things not seen." Faith is that power of the mind by which it makes real to itself something that is not sensuous and material. It is the power of conceiving by the mind things that are invisible to the body. As a man grows in Christian life, and grows in that part of Christian life which is to make him depend more upon invisible than on visible things, this element must come to his help—the power of imagination, by which we conceive and make things real that are but conceptions—that have no visible form.

Men are less dependent for happiness, in this condition, upon wealth; upon certain positions in society; upon power and victory; upon rivalry, and its successes. In other words, as men learn to derive more of their enjoyment from their own inward selves, and from the higher forms of spiritual association, they are not so dependent upon their outward conditions as they were before for happiness. They can be happier, perhaps, with outward things, in a fitting way; but they can be happy without them; and they learn more and more to be happy without them. But this does not imply any contempt for these things.

When a man first begins to write, his book is ruled, because he does not know how. He runs his letters along on the penciled line, which he afterward rubs out—or tries to. And when men first begin in life, God, as it were, rules their path by physical things; but as they learn to live by something higher, the lines are rubbed out, or taken away, and they learn to live without any such basis for their letters.

It is true that society has in it all sorts of rude and undeveloped

people. Society requires wealth. It requires that there should be ten thousand things for the senses. And men live sensuously, and live right while they are living sensuously. But it is a lower form of life that they are living. And just in proportion as men rise higher and higher in the Christian development, they are less and less dependent upon their physical conditions for their enjoyment. They do not revile them. It is not the old cynical spirit. It is not deriding the body and the flesh. It is simply the recognition that material experiences and enjoyments are wise and beneficial for the lower forms of life, but that every man ought, by their very use, to have risen so high as to open for himself yet higher ones, that are not dependent upon the mutations of physical things.

2. But—paradoxical as it may seem—when one has reached this state in which he begins to have a power of enjoyment and a power of peace, independent of his relationship, he has a more exquisite enjoyment of material things than he ever had before. No man is prepared to have anything in the Christian sense of the term, who is not prepared to lose it and to do without it. The moment a man can say, "Not my will, but thine be done," it is safe to trust him with his own will; but just so long as a man is not willing to submit to a higher will, it is not safe to trust him with his own. In other words, the higher spiritual states of the mind are more exquisitely susceptible to pleasures of rightful physical joy, than are the physical attributes themselves by which we first comprehend those joys. Let a man look upon this material world, and all its resources of pleasure, with a purely material eye, and he cannot derive from it such enjoyment as a man who looks at it through the spiritual and poetic elements. These higher faculties are susceptible of deriving a pleasure from the material globe which the lower and purely sensuous faculties cannot get out of it.

Society, and all its innocent gayeties, which belong to us, are more pleasurable when we have learned to get along without them, than they were when they were indispensable to us. There are persons here that know this is true. There are those present who remember how in their early access to society, their puturbed, glowing, unruled, youthful impulses, shot out with a certain wild, rank impunity, and would not be controlled. But you have outlived that. You have come to that state in which society is not so indispensable to you. And yet, you are able to bear witness that though now you can get along without it, when it pleases the providence of God to put you into it, you are conscious that you are deriving from it a pleasure that you did not have when you were made well-nigh insane by it. Psychologically interpreted it is this: That when we first come into society, and its pleasures,

we come into them by our lower faculties; whereas, when we have gone on, and developed a higher range of life, if we return to society, with our higher faculties developed, while we are freer, and while we dominate our social conditions, they are capable of expressing from society a wine that is purer and more joyous than that which comes from the earlier and lower sentient enjoyment. So that a man has this anomoly in his own experience: that he cares less for society, and is made a great deal happier by it than he used to be.

Property is not enjoyed in the eagerness of getting it, and in the early stages of it, as it is when one has risen above it, and is willing to lose it. There are those here who will understand this, too: that when the first wild fling of adventure was in them; when they were, so to speak, explorers, without experience; when they felt the eagerness, the intense gratification, of the first success, and the joy of ever-opening ambition by which they foresaw what they were to be by-and by, they were not so happy as afterwards, when they had acquired wealth, and had proved it, and were more temperate and calm. If they are somewhat disappointed in the power of wealth to make them happy, there is yet an element of satisfaction that remains. They now look upon it in the light of the higher feelings and the better reason, and see what it can, and what it cannot do. And they will bear testimony that though they value it less, it makes them more happy. Just in proportion as they let go of it; in proportion as they compel their lower instincts not to idolize it; in proportion as they look down upon it as rational beings, from a higher moral standpoint—just in that proportion it is able to give them a more exquisite enjoyment. So men are not fit to have property till they are ripe enough not to care whether they have it or not—that is, until they cease to care intensely for it.

It is the same with friendship. So long as we are idolators in the temple of love, we are unfit to worship. When we have gone so far up that we have made God supreme, and have put in his hands our dearest friends, and have been able to say in regard to that which is nearest to us, "Thy will be done," it may cost us a struggle to say it, but we shall find that they are more to us than they were before. When the mother has lifted her child up, and has at last said to God, "Take it; thy will be done," God gives it back to her, and it is safe for her to hold it now. She loves it more than she ever did, because she is conscious that she loves it with the higher nature. It is a finer love that she experiences. It transcends anything that she ever knew before.

Oh! in how many places has Christian faith triumphed! How many mothers have stood struggling by the side of their children that were dying, or seemed about to die, and gained victories! When they

come to that state in which they are able to give them up, they are conscious that they take more joy in them than they did before.

And as it is with our friendship, so it is with every point by which we touch life. When we first begin to touch life, we touch it by the lower and intermediate faculties. And it is a lower and coarser joy which we experience under such circumstances. But when we have developed ourselves to the higher spiritual condition, we come to the same things by another class of faculties. We are not bound by them; we are not in bondage to them, we are not judged by them, as before; and yet, we derive from them more exquisite pleasure. But they are more allied to peace, as we shall see, further on.

3. This higher condition of spiritual growth brings the soul into a more intense realization of the personality of God. And here we have another paradox. A true spiritual life is full of paradoxes. Peace, interpreted by one set of faculties, and on one side, looks one way, and interpreted by another set of faculties, and on the other side, looks another way. And both are true. At the same time that the higher spiritual life gives us a sense of the personality of God, it gives a universality to him which fills all nature, and which associates the divine presence with every phenomenon of the world. The first stage of the knowledge of God is, as it were, to gather him in from immensity.

When the mind first attempts to pray, when it first attempts to lift itself up to a conception of God, it complains that he is so vast, and so vague, and so universally diffused, that the heart cannot conceive, nor the hand, as it were, touch him. So that the very first step of development in the direction of God is, if I may so say, to condense into personalty these vague and immense attributes—till we begin to have a distinct sense of personal character.

But no sooner do we begin to have this distinct sense of personal character, than there begins a second process—the process of distribution again, by which that which has become personal begins to be pantheistic: not pantheistic in the bad philosophic sense, but pantheistic in the true and Christian sense. The first stage of growth toward God is in the direction of personality of character and being; and just as soon as we begin to feel that, just so soon we begin to feel, also, that he is the God of the whole earth, and to see his footsteps, and his handmarks, and the tokens of his genius, everywhere.

First, the child learns to love his father as a person in the household; but as he grows older he begins to see his father in the handwriting that lies on the secretary; he sees him in the chair that stands in the corner; in the hat and coat that hang on the nail; in the cane; in the garden; all through the house, and around about it—everywhere that his father has thought and shown his taste, and performed his

labor. The child learns to see his father wherever he goes, in whatever his father's being is associated with. He sees him in every element which is the outworking of his thought and skill and power. He sees his whole personality.

I remember very well, being waked up, on dreamy moonlit nights, by the whippoorwill. Its wild, strange song trumpeted through the air, and I was seized with I know not what inspiration. My soul exhaled, and I quivered with a kind of pleasant terror. I would fain have called out, but that I did not dare to hear my own voice in the silence. The light of the moon, streaming through the window and filling the room, brought tears, half of pleasure and half of terror, which ran down my cheeks. Presently I heard my father hem, in the adjoining room; and then it was all peace. Just that simplest inarticulate sound, that brought quick through my fancy a sense of my father's presence, dissipated all terror. I was myself again in an instant. From this least hint and sign of personality, how quick the whole person came!

We must needs have a clear, *clear* sense of God real and personal, with an intellect, with moral feelings, with a will, with affections, with a nature like our own—for we cannot understand anything outside of our own nature, absolutely.

When once we have attained that end, the next higher development of the mind is to give it diffusion, so that the heavens, now, at last, begin to declare the glory of a God, and the earth to show his handiwork to us, and we see him in the morning and evening, in every season, in the tree, and grass, and brook, and rock, and flower, in the brute creation, and in all the developments of human society. Everywhere, and always, there is this sense of God universally present, until at last we come to that stage of blessed development in which we are no longer dependent upon times and seasons, or upon places of worship, as at the beginning we were. All days are Sunday, all hours are hours of worship, and all places are temples, to us. But this is the later stage of development, and is not to be presumed upon by neophytes, beginners, early disciples. As the result of culture and habit, and the use of spiritual influences, we come into a state in which, day and night, we are never without a sense of our Father's presence. We live under the same roof with him. He fulfills to us the promise, "I will come in and abide with you."

When, therefore, one class of men in society seeing how disputes come from doctrines, say, "Doctrines are good for nothing," I say, "They *are* good for something." When men say, "Ecclesiastical governments are good for nothing," I say, "They *are* good for something." When men say, "Creeds and regulations are good for noth

ing," I say, "They *are* good for something." They are all good for the lower stages of development. And as society is going up continuously, there is always a new stratum of men who require that things shall be regulated by times, and seasons, and governments, and that there shall be rules, and principles, and formulas of belief, as well as forms and methods of devotion. But as these are for the earlier stages of development, a man's business is to get rid of them as soon as possible, and leave them behind, by so growing as at last not to heed them.

When a man first reads, he reads with his finger—"A–n–d, and; t–h–a–t, that;" and he ought to read so when he cannot read any better. But ought he to read so all his life long?

There are many persons that write prayers, and forms of public worship, and say that it helps. I say that it helps, too. It is just like reading when you have to spell out the words. But if it helps, it ought to help you so that pretty soon you will not need it. You ought not to go on forever and forever like a child that always spells his words, and never learns to read. You should "read out loud and clear," as the teachers used to say.

All these forms of doctrine, organization and service, are real in their function; they are indispensable as a part of the course of education; but they are none the less signs of a lower eduction, and of a lower, undeveloped life; and it is none the less true that, as men rise into a higher knowledge of God, and into a better use of their higher moral nature, these things are to be laid aside. As the child lays aside the chair or the walking stool, by which its first steps have been helped, so we are to lay aside those helps which were designed to aid us in the early stages of our Christian life. We are, as the apostle directs, to leave first principles, and the laying on of hands, and go on unto perfection. There is no quarrel between these things and the higher condition of the soul, any more than there is between childhood and manhood. Both are true. Men need these things at certain stages, and do not need them at certain other stages.

4. With this process of development will always come another—one through which we develop into the higher moral nature by the discipline of God's providence. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and by the realization in us of the power of truth as it is in Christ Jesus, we shall find that we are going in one uniform, invariable direction into it. You never will see a person going into the higher moral state through the gate of any sharp, conscious, malign feeling, which it utterly negates. The malign feelings are mephitic gas to the higher nature. Show me, therefore, a saint, that is truly a saint, and I will show you a saint that is gently, cheerfully, mildly, sweetly a saint. In other words, as fruit is very sour when it is green, so are Christians; and as

fruit when it ripens is sweet, so are Christians. All true religious growth is toward sweetness. Mildness and sweetness are the characteristics of ripeness. If, therefore, you find that one is more stringent, more sharp, more consciously greedy, as he grows in Christian life, you may be sure that he took the wrong shoot. He is not growing the right way.

There are a great many men who are like one of my roses. I bought a *Gloire de Dijon.* It was said to be one of the few ever-blooming roses. It was grafted on a manetti stalk—a kind of dog rose, a rampant and enormous grower, and a very good stalk to graft fine roses on. I planted it. It throve the first part of the summer, and the last part of the summer it grew with great vigor; and I quite gloried, when the next spring came, in my *Gloire de Dijon.* It had wood enough to make twenty such roses as these finer varieties usually have; and I was in the amplitude of triumph. I said, "My soil suits it exactly in this climate; and I will write an article for the *Monthly Gardener*, and tell what luck I have had with it." So I waited, and waited, and waited till it blossomed; and behold! it was one of those worthless, quarter-of-a-dollar, single-blossomed roses. And when I came to examine it, I found that it was grafted, and that there was a little bit of a graft down near the ground, and that it was the manetti sprout that had grown to such a prodigious size.

Now, I have seen a great many people converted, in whom the conversion did not grow, but the old nature did. A man may be a Christian, you know, in a spot; and growth in that spot should be such as to keep down nature. The whole power of the root should be thrown into the new scion, which should make the stem and the top. If, therefore, you see a man that is sharp, and full of thorns, you may be sure that it is a manetti stalk that is growing, and not a *Gloire de Dijon*—nor a *Gloire de Jerusalem*, either! It is nature, and not grace. For just as sure as God is love, so sure they that are his children, and that are growing according to the new nature in Christ Jesus, are growing toward gentleness and sweetness, and easy-to-be-entreatedness. They are full of love, and the fruits of love. An eminent development in grace is an eminent development toward gentleness and sweetness and agreeableness.

You cannot help loving a man that is a Christian in the later stages. If you *try*, you cannot help it. The ear might as well say that it does not love music, or the eye that it does not love color, or the tongue that it does not love sweet flavors, as the moral consciousness of men say that it does not love that which is intrinsically sweet and harmonious and beautiful, when it sees it worked out in the highest and best forms.

5. The progress of true Christian development will be accompanied with a process of disinterestedness, lowliness, non-exactingness, unboastingness, childlikeness, and simplicity. I do not say that you are to set these things before you, and aim at them as a mark. I say that the natural unfolding of a man that is growing will bring him to them. There will be a consciousness of unworth.

I never like to see a man too morbid about his sins. Neither do I like to see a man who does not think he has any sins. The true unfolding of grace in the soul fills one, to be sure, with a sense of imperfection, of unwrought nature, and of sinfulness; but if God has been dwelling with a man for a score of years, it is not for him to get up and speak of himself as having never had such a royal schoolmaster in his bosom. It is no compliment to divine grace for a man who has been forty years in the church to get up and say, "I feel as though I was a vile and filthy rag." He *is* a vile and filthy rag to say that!

Paul said, "Be ye followers of me. Not as though I had already attained. This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In other words, "As far as I am a follower of Christ, be ye followers of me." He gloried that in many things he did begin to represent Christ, and present a model from which men low down could see God's perfection better than from its higher spiritual amplitude and beauty.

A man is not to be morbidly, and certainly not conventionally, a slanderer of himself; for if he is truly a child of God there will be a thousand things in which he will know it and feel it, and in which other men will know it and feel it. Nevertheless, just as soon as a man begins to know it too much, and feel it too much, he spoils it all. Just as soon as you see a man put on that indescribable look of conscious elevation, as much as to say, "Thank God that I am not as other men are;" as soon as a man assumes that pitying and patronizing holiness which you sometimes see in people who talk to you, and thank God that they have gained such eminence, and are sorry that you have not; as soon as a man looks down on those around about him with a compassionate concern, as much as to say, "I do not blame you for not being as good as I am—for I am extraordinarily good; but I pity you that you are not—as soon as a man becomes so conscious of his superiority as to manifest that consciousness in ways like these, he destroys that beauty of the Christian life which he might otherwise exhibit. He is given to spiritual conceit; and no matter how much you discuss it, no matter how much English language you rub over it, you cannot make anything else of it. Some men seem to think that if they use

enough language, that will change moral qualities. They seem to think that if they say that they are humble often enough, people will think that they are humble. But people are not deceived in any such way.

When a man is growing in grace, he will have his faults and his follies; but, after all, you will find that besides growing in the direction of light and sweetness, he will always be growing in the direction of simplicity, and childlikeness, and unfeigned humility. He will know where he is strong; and if you dispute him he will fight you, perhaps; but if you let him alone he will also know where he is weak, and will confess his weakness, and mourn over it before God. But this simplicity, this childlikeness, this humility, is one of the characteristics of the later stages of true development in Christian life.

6. This higher inward life will be marked by the conversion of the voluntary states of mind into involuntary states, in greater and greater proportion. We hear a great deal about the will, and about voluntariness in the service of God, and about the want of moral quality in involuntary states. The old theologians especially used to discuss this subject. My father, and all those that were around about him did. They meant the right thing when they were discussing it; but their discussion has produced a secondary effect—that of impressing men's minds with the feeling that a man does not do a thing perfectly unless he does it on purpose, and knows that he is doing it. I take the opposite ground, and say that a man does nothing perfectly till he does it without knowing that he does it. It is a universal principle that no man does a thing well till he has converted it from purposed doing to unconscious doing—in other words, till he does it by habit, spontaneously, rather than on purpose.

Children are almost always graceful; but the moment they come to be neither children nor men, hovering half way between, in the land of awkwardness, then they think, "What shall I do with my hands when I go into the parlor?" And the moment they begin to think, they do not know how to do anything. They think, "How shall I stand?" or "How shall I speak?" And the moment they think about it, and do it on purpose, how instinctively they do it in an embarrassed and awkward manner! But after they have become wonted to society, they never think about these things. Then they fall back and resume their childlike grace and propriety of conduct.

If every time a man does a sum, he has to do it by the most painful process of reasoning, as I do (for if I add six and seven, I have to analyze the seven, and say, "Six and six are twelve, and one is thirteen,") he performs the work very imperfectly. But how is it with an accountant in a bank? Some men run up a whole page of columns together.

That is a very different thing from making a study of it. Hand them a roll of bills, and they will discover whether they are genuine or not, as fast as they can run them over. You and I will take a roll of bills and examine them for a long time, and finally conclude that they are good, or that they are bad, as the case may be; but put them into the hands of a clerk who is accustomed to handling money, and see how he will throw them out, one after another, into twenty piles, keeping in his mind the location of the banks—whether they are Eastern or Western; the denomination; and whether the bills are good or counterfeit. If any of them are counterfeit he knows it without looking at them. He *feels* it.

An old gentleman, who died not a great while ago, who used to attend church here, and who was a gold-teller in many of the banks, his business being to count gold, told me he could take piles and piles of gold on a counter, and throw them out just as fast as he could make his hand go, and detect any counterfeit pieces that there might be among them. He knew by the feeling whether they were full weight, whether they were genuine metal, and whether they were split and filled with some base material. He could discover all the adulerations that rogues were accustomed to practice on coins, by instinct. He was educated to it. It was not because he thought about doing it that he could do it: he did it without volition.

As long as a man thinks what he is going to say, he cannot be a public speaker. His speaking must get ahead of him, and he must go on behind it, and find out what he has said, as it were. That is the sensation that he has. A man that is a poet is to be caught by inspiration, and carried on. And no man is more surprised than the man that has done these things, to think that he has done them. A man that is working in the higher range is like a speaking trumpet, that never speaks, but is spoken through. That is the feeling. The artist that stops and looks at his pallet, and says, "What shall I put there? I do not know," has mistaken his vocation. A true artist puts the right thing there, and then says, "I wonder why I did it?" He is first led to do it, and then he analyzes and finds out the reason.

This is one of the most important elements of moral education. No grace that you have to tug and pull at is a grace that you yet possess. If a man wants to be humble, and thinks about being humble, and tries to be humble, and says, "What shall I do to make myself humble?" that is better than nothing; but he is on the lowest form in the school. He is an abecedarian. When a man has learned to be humble, he is humble spontaneously, and before he knows it. If a man is really meek, his meekness must not be on purpose. A man's meekness must leap out at once. He must have had such practice that it will

come without any volition on his part. And so of generosity; so of forgiveness; so of that deep, unfolding love which shall spring up from generous impulses, and from forbearance, and from goodness, or from the nature of God, which overflows heaven, and deluges the universe itself. The feeling must be in you so strong, so full, so continuous, that it takes care of itself, and gushes out perpetually in every direction. And you are in this secret, higher religious state, just in proportion as you are involuntarily good, in distinction from being purposely and voluntarily good.

I meant to speak of the development in the later period of life of the element of beauty, and to show how closely it stands connected with moral experience. I believe that all physical beauty is but the faint outworking of the higher fountain of beauty which has essential beauty of idea and moral quality. This is one of the unfailing developments of the true higher life in its later stages.

The sun may be more powerful at mid-day, when the light is white and intense, and the heat pervades all things; but, after all, for beauty, give me the sun when it has travelled through the day, and has fallen so low that it begins to look aslant through the trees, and cast long shadows, checkering the earth, and filling the heavens, and staining the clouds, and surrounding itself with magnificent glory. Then the sun is most beautiful.

And the most beautiful thing that lives on this earth is not the child in the cradle, sweet as it is. It is not ample enough. It has not had history enough. It is all prophecy. Let me see one who has wrought through life; let me see a great nature that has gone through sorrows, through fire, through the flood, through the thunder of battle, ripening, sweetening, enlarging, and growing finer and finer, and gentler and gentler, that fineness and gentleness being the result of great strength and great knowledge accumulated through a long life—let me see such an one stand at the end of life, as the sun stands on a summer afternoon, just before it goes down. Is there anything on earth so beautiful as a rich, ripe, large, glowing and glorious Christian heart? No, nothing.

My dear brethren, it is toward this final stage, these higher developments, that every one of us should set his whole Christian life. Many of you are young. You cannot come into such experiences except through intermediate ones. Do not be discouraged if you fail to have the higher joy, the higher light, the higher disclosures. Never forget, however, that you are on your way toward them.

If I had a little child that I wished to inspire with a love of horticulture, I might take him into Cushing's garden near Boston, or into any of the green-houses and hot-houses in New York, just to raise his

ideal of what art can do in perfecting flowers. I might take him in just to show him some of the most perfectly reared roses, and geraniums, and cinerarias, or any of the other fine hot-house flowers. And I might give him a little patch of ground to cultivate and raise flowers on. But I would say to him, "You must not expect that you are going to raise such flowers as those at first. You have everything to learn." I would encourage him, however, summer by summer, as his experience increased, to improve his flowers, and make them finer and finer. And by and by, after years had ripened his little powers, and his skill of hand, he might begin to vie, in some single flowers, with those which he saw in the green-houses. But not for years afterwards could he take a green-house, and fill its shelves all around so that every single month of the year should have its floral triumph by reason of his skill.

You are all gardeners, and are just planting seeds. Your ambition is toward this later stage of development. And never forget that it is not enough for you just to have been born again. It is not enough for you to have set your faces toward Jerusalem. It is not enough for you to overcome the common sins, and to attain the common moralities. A great growth, a noble manhood, lies before you. There is a magnificent experience possible to every one of you. It is not possible in equal degrees to all; but in some degree it is possible to every one of you. There is not a soul here that may not reach this later and more glorious disclosure of divine grace. And if in the providence of God some of you seem to yourselves to be hindered, debarred; if some of you seem to have been blown off the coast, by the dreary winds; if some of you, as it were, are storm-beaten, and have lost your mast, and roll as if to founder in the sea, do not be discouraged. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

I have known fathers who, while bringing their sons up to riches, were seemingly cruel to them, and pushed them off. As the lioness, when she would wean her cubs, pushes them off, and teaches them to be lions of the desert; so a wise father pushes off his boy from servile dependence, and makes him take care of himself, and almost laughs to see him wallowing in trouble, and says to himself, "I am sorry; but, after all, that is the way to make a man of him—and I want to make a man of him." And it is the faith of the thing which is coming after the sorrow that makes the father rejoice, and seem so cruel to his young cubs. And so our Heavenly Father says, "Whom I love I chasten."

When you are disappointed, when you are vexed, when you are hedged in, when you are thwarted, when you are seemingly abandoned, remember, son of God, heir of heaven, that you are being prepared for this higher life. You need courage; and that is the way to have it

You need patience; and that is the way to achieve it. You need perseverence, and that is the way to develop it. You need faith, and you never will have it unless you are brought to circumstances in which you are bound to act by the invisible rather than by the visible. You need those Christian graces of which the Bible speaks, and of which the pulpit preaches; and practical life, with its various vicissitudes, is God's school in which you are to acquire these things.

Do not be discouraged, then, nor cast down. When you are bestead, remember that God is dealing with you as a good schoolmaster. Though he be a severe one, you will thank him for his severity by-and-by.

Old men, tell this to young men. Tell them that you are more thankful to God for the memory of past sufferings, than for the memory of past joys. The laughter of youth—what did that do to you? The gayities of your early days—what did they do to you? They were like gleams of the summer sun which, falling upon the broken surface of water, flash beauty. They did nothing. They reared nothing. They ripened nothing. It was those hard grinding periods and passages of experience that brought you out at last, it may be with a slender victory, but yet undefeated. Those are the things that you look back upon and say, "It was a hard time, but it did me good." Did you good? Yes, it did you good in just that point where no man can afford to be poor—in your manhood. It saved you just where if you are bankrupt, you are bankrupt forever and forever—in your heart and conscience.

Therefore, when God is dealing with you in the cradle and in the crib, in the chest and in the till, in ambitions and in strifes, do not accuse him. Do not cry out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Remember that to those who are *exercised thereby*, God shows his love and his fatherhood. Bow yourselves meekly to the chastisements of God, and see to it, not that you can get away from trouble, but that you can rise above trouble, by being made better by it.

Very soon, *very soon*, dear Christian brethren, we shall come together where you and I will know the truth of what I have been preaching this morning.

When a man is once across the sea, and in this free land, it matters not whether he came in a stately steamship, or in a fine packet-ship, sailing many more days, or in the poorest tub that ever weathered the ocean. On the way over it makes a good deal of difference; but when he is once here, it does not matter.

Now, we are all sailing across the sea of life, in different vessels. Some of them leak, some of them are slow, some of them are very fine and stately, some of them have cruel captains, and some of them have

good captains; but when once we get our feet on the shore of the New Jerusalem, we shall not care what took us over there, nor what our fear was on the way.

See to it, then, that you reach the heavenly city. See to it that God is your God. See to it that you have a child's right. Of all the trumpets that you can lift up at the heavenly gate, there is but one that will let you in. Blow the trumpet, if you will, of your own good deeds, and there is not an angel in all the heaven that will know the sound. Let pride speak or speak through your vanity, and you will fail to summon a messenger to the heavenly gate. But blow the trumpet of love, and its first lisping sound will quickly roll back the bolt, and lift the latch, and open the heavenly gate, and you shall come in with a child's welcome, and find your Father's house, and your heart's delight. Learn this love, and rise to this home, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We desire to render thee thanks, our heavenly Father, for all the mercies which thou hast extended to us—mercies of the seasons, and mercies of thy providence in life for the household; for all the processes of life by which we have learned to think and to act; by which we have been disciplined to patience, to foresight, to prudence, and to patient endeavor under discouragement. We thank thee for all the instruction of the sanctuary. We thank thee that we understand the meaning of things that are done without, that we are made to perceive how all things are working together in thy providence for spiritual results. We thank thee, above all, for that ministration of the Holy Ghost, that inward working of divine light and fire, by which we have been able to lift ourselves above the knowledge of the senses, and of material things. We thank thee that we are inspired even beyond the reach of the following thought and reason, and that there are sacred impressions which thou dost work upon us, which abide, which we believe and know to be true, which lift us above all things that are low and base and ignoble, and which drive our whole life upward toward thine. We thank thee for this watchful guardianship, and this loving care, and that thou hast ministered it to so many of us consciously; and to so many more of us, though we are unconscious of it. None of us know all thy sovereign care, and all the particulars of thy infinite and unceasing love. Nor shall we know it till we behold thee as thou art, and see with something of thine omniscience. But we rejoice in what we know, and desire to derive therefrom arguments of faith and trust for all the time to come. Since all things shall work together for good to them that love thee, why should we give way to murmuring? Why should we be sodden with anxiety? Why should we look out darkly from to-day into to-morrow? May we behold all the time that is yet to come as under thy Fatherly care. Grant that we may have faith to trust thee; to lean our outward welfare, and also our whole spiritual life, upon thee. We thank thee that thou art preparing us for resurrection into a nobler sphere. We desire to be more and more anxious for that other condition and for those ulterior riches. We desire not to be unmindful of the state that we are now in, and of the things which belong to this life. But in them we wish that we might see prophecies of thy better kingdom, and of our nobler character when we shall be kings and priests unto God. Grant that the other light may break

through, and that we may discern it in this mortal sphere. O let us hear the sounds that are uttered in the heavenly land. Let us feel wafted upon us the influences that there roll as the atmosphere rolls here.

O bring to us a sense of God's infinite love. Bring to us a sense of that divine fellowship in which all noble souls move together. Bring to us a sense of that harmony and of the grandeur of that friendship and love which they have who have passed through the flood and through the fire, and are prepared, spirits of just men made perfect, to enter upon the glory of the heavenly sphere. And may we long for that manhood which is in Christ Jesus. May we lie upon the bosom of thy promises, waiting for their fulfillment in us.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may understand that all thy dealing with us from day to day, is a part of this work; and may we be workers together with God, working out our salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all the families of this church and society. Grant that all that are accustomed to sit here from Sabbath to Sabbath may have the blessing of the sanctuary abiding upon them. Hence may they bear sacred fire to kindle the flame of devotion at home. Hence may they bear light. Here may they derive peace. Here may the storehouse of divine bounty feed them. Here may they clothe themselves with raiment from above. Here, every Sabbath day, may thy servants be able to equip themselves and put on the whole armor of God, that they may go forth more truthful, more gentle, more gracious, more loving, more faithful, more earnest, more full of wisdom that belongs to this life, and more full of that higher wisdom which belongs to the life to come.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt be near to those who are sick, and to all who are in suffering, and to all who are under the cloud from any cause. And grant, O Lord our God! that they may discern thy presence very near to them. If there are any that mourn the loss of dearly beloved ones. wilt thou comfort them. Wilt thou uphold their hearts, and give to them such comforting thoughts that their souls shall know that the Lord thinks of them, and that he sympathizes with them.

Prepare us for any events that lie undisclosed to view. May we be found in every emergency equal to the exigency. May we have such strength ministered from on high that nothing shall surprise us, and nothing shall overcome us. And may we write as our daily experience, even in the midst of tumult and trouble, Cast down but not destroyed.

So may we live by thy strength, so in thy strength may we be able through weakness to die triumphantly, and so by thy strength may we rise gloriously in the resurrection morning to be forever with the Lord.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou bless the word which has been spoken. Wilt thou grant that we may be made wiser by thy truth, and by thy providence, and by thy grace through the Holy Ghost. Grant that we may understand thee. And understanding thee, may we understand thy daily work with us—the whole meaning of life, and all the processes by which it is unfolded and made into a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus.

Wilt thou go with us when we shall have sung again to thy praise. Go with us through life. Be with us in dying. Let us be with thee in immortality. And unto the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises, evermore. *Amen.*

COMING TO ONE'S SELF.

"And when he came to himself."—LUKE XV. 17.

From the exquisite parable of the Prodigal Son, I have selected this fragment, because it is like an orifice opened, through which you see some of the profoundest operations of the human heart.

Consider the history that this fable or parable details, and the point at which this utterance was made. The young man had claimed his full liberty, and the means of conducting life according to his own notion. He declared himself free, and went off from his father, bearing with him such portion of the estate as belonged to him, or would belong to him, in order that he might live according to his own desire. He did conduct his life according to his own desire. He went through a *brilliant career*, as it is often styled; that is, a career in which every passion was made to scintillate, and flash light and warmth. The career worked itself out to the very dregs, showing both parts of itself—its beginning and its termination. At the last, poverty, beggary, degradation, hunger, and finally despair, took the place of wild intoxication and lawless pleasure; and then he was as wretched as before he had been happy.

The implication is, that in this whole career—the breaking away from his father's house; the going into disallowed society; the pursuing of courses that violated every principle of morality and of honor,—he had not acted in accordance with his true nature. He had abandoned himself. He had left his manhood somewhere behind. There was something that had been left out, or forsaken. And when his wretchedness had humbled him, so that he clearly saw his course in its true light, and began to change it, or to purpose to change it, it is said that he began to *come to himself*. He came to himself, though it were but for a moment.

We may interpret this as we use the term familiarly, as where a man is out of his head, out of his mind, and we say when his reason is restored that he has *come to himself* again. Or, when a man comes

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out of a swoon, he is said to *come to himself*, by which is meant, simply, that he comes to the possession and use of faculties that for a time were clouded, or hindered in their operation.

You may also use it in a broader sense; and it is thus that I propose to use it. It may be made to throw much light on the course which men are pursuing at large—even those who do not indulge in passionate excesses, and in the wallow of the appetites.

It is proper that we should determine what a man's manhood is; what it is that is *man*, in man. Not everything. There is a difference between men and the animated creation, a part of which they are. They are said to be the head of the animal creation. By virtue of what? Why are they different? In what does that difference consist? In determining this, it is proper that we should characterize every one by that which is the highest and best in him. If you wished to define or characterize a king, it is not those things which he has in common with all his subjects that you would employ, but those things which separate him from others, and put him in distinction from them. If you are attempting to describe a philosopher, you mention those things which are peculiar to a philosopher. It is not that he eats, and drinks, and sleeps, that makes him a philosopher; for all men do these things. Fools do, and idiots do, as well as he. You are to single out those things which make him a philosopher, in order to characterize him. This is perfectly right. It is the common sense way of distinguishing all men.

Now, in determining a man's true nature and position, the same rule is fair. What our manhood is, is determined, not by the things which we have in common with the great mass of animated creation, but by those things which lift us higher than they, marking us as superior to them. We come all the way up in physical organization with the myriad tribes that fly, or swim, or creep, or walk. It is not those things that we have in common with them which make our manhood. We have all those same appetites and passions by which they maintain life; by which they fight off their enemies; by which they secure, in the struggle of life, the means of existence. We and they are just alike in those respects. And it is not fair to attempt to determine our manhood by the things which we have in common with the ass, with the ox, with the lion, or with the serpent. We must rise higher than the things which are possessed by these creatures, in order to find out what manhood is in man.

Looking at it in this light, the first thing that I will mention, as discriminating men from every other part of creation, and as constituting a portion of their true manhood, is their reason—and that in two aspects.

First, let us consider it as a governing light and power. I believe the superior animals have the germs or rudiments of reason. There is no question that the dog does, in a very limited way, reason, and that the elephant does, and that the horse does. And that reason in these animals is of the same general kind as the human reason, I do not doubt. But it is very limited, very low, and only occasional. In them it does not serve as a guide, and it is only now and then that it acts at all; whereas in man reason is a light that, shining, shines all the time, growing brighter and brighter, and more and more comprehensive, and entering into every part of his life, determining choices, likes and dislikes, aims and ends, and is a governing influence.

The other view which we are to take of reason, is that by its force we are able to prophesy. That is to say, experience does lay a foundation by which a man may judge from the results of certain causes to-day what will be the results of those causes to-morrow. For instance, if last year, sowing, we derived such and such results, we prophesy that if we sow this year we shall derive the same results. We have not a reason that prophesies in respect to indeterminate things of which we have no ordinary experience; but within the range of cause and effect the human reason is prophetic, so that a man is able to connect all his life together. And this it is which distinguishes between the human and brute reason more significantly than anything else. A horse, so far as we can see, lives only from day to day. There is no token that he thinks of to-morrow. He certainly does not think of next week, or next month. There is a sort of rude prevision or caution in some animals—in the beaver, for instance. We cannot see what are its metes and bounds; but we see that there are the rudiments of what in the human animal is prophetic reason—that power by which men carry, through a long life, a complex organization, each of whose parts acts upon every other part.

Here, then, is one grand distinguishing trait of manhood which stands separated from the whole animal kingdom around about us. We have a volume and potency of reason which belongs to no other animals; and that is one of the constituent elements of our manhood. The reason that looks before and after; the reason that takes cognisance both of things seen and things invisible; the reason that recognizes parts and relations and qualities, and so works by the senses, and above the senses, in a higher sphere—this is manhood reason.

The next constituent element of a true manhood is moral sense, or a constitution by which the soul recognizes moral obligations, from which, by a comparison of the performance of our life, measured by obligation, we come to understand the qualities of right and wrong; to accept a higher standard of obligation than mere self-will, or

than mere self-indulgence and pleasure. There is no evidence that animals ever have a conception of right and wrong. They have of pleasure and pain. They fear the one, and desire the other. That seems to be the limit. And all the choices of animals vibrate simply between the senses of pleasure and pain.

It is not so in man. We lift ourselves far above that. Every reasonable man in an ordinarily well instructed community is conscious that right-and-wrong has a vast sphere, and that he acts from day to day in reference to those beneath him and those above him, in reference to property, and reputation, and name, and mutual service, and all manner of things, by a subtle operation within him of the moral sense; and that there is a principle of right or wrong. However much he may neglect it, however imperfect its operations may become, that quality is there; and it is that quality which distinguishes between the human race and the animal races beneath. It is not merely that we have reason, but that we have a reason which busies itself in attempting to adjust this great element of right and wrong.

Then we have one more characteristic—a spiritual nature—an endowment of sentiments which inspire the idea of purity, of self-denial, of holy love, of supersensuousness. I prefer the term *supersensuous* to the term *supernatural;* for I hold that religion is just as natural as nature itself, and that of the spiritual intuitions of the soul the highest are conformable to the law of nature—of higher nature.

There is no evidence that the animal kingdom have the first gleam or intimation of spiritual influence. This is peculiar to man. And in the human race it is the lowest and the least in those that are said to be nearest to nature—that is, nearest to mere physical nature; and it develops just in the ratio of civilization. There can be no civilization that does not augment reason in both respects—as a light, and as prophecy. There can be no civilization that does not augment the moral sense. There can be no civilization that does not augment the spiritual nature, giving to man a higher upper-life; giving him more of the qualities of love and hope and faith, and of fine discrimination in these superior and ultimate moral states.

I might argue—and fairly, I think—that these best things are always, in the order of nature, latest. That is, as everything comes to its fullest value last, an observation of the law of development would show that, as reason comes earliest, the moral sense next, and the spiritual faculties last, so this is the order of superiority; and the manhood of a man lies, highest in his spiritual influence, next in his moral sentiments, and lowest in his reason. But in all these three—in this trinity of qualification—he stands distinguished above all his fellows in the great animated kingdom of the world. He is superior to them be-

cause he is a creature of reason, and moral sentiments, and spiritual endowments.

It is in these things, then, that our manhood lies. It does not lie in the fact that we are erect. It does not lie in the fact that we are called *men*. It lies in the fact that we have, in distinction from every other creature that we know of on the globe, a superior and prophetic reason, guiding life, and connecting all parts of it together in symmetry and in purpose; that we have conceptions of right and wrong which fit us to live in infinite complications with our fellow men, and still observe the law of love and the law of their happiness: and that we have relations to another life beyond this, supersensuous, above the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, wherein the soul can even here begin to take hold of invisible beings, invisible qualities, and invisible states, and know itself to be a child of God and of immortality.

It is in this higher range of faculties, thus very briefly, compendiously defined, that a man is to look for his manhood. You are a man by as much as you have this particular part developed. You are less than a man just in the proportion in which you recede and shrink from this kind of measuring. As you would never think of measuring a musician by considering what he was as a draftsman, or what he was as a mathematician, but by considering what he was as a musician; as you would measure him by those qualities which belong to a musician: so in measuring manhood, you must take those qualities which are constituent in manhood, and judge by them.

Since one's manhood, or his true self, is to be found in his nobler attributes, and in his true spiritual relations, he who leaves these unused, and lives in the lower range of faculties, may be truly said to have forsaken himself. He has gone down out of himself into that which was a supplementary nature, an auxiliary part. He has left that nature of reason, and that nature of moral sense, and that nature of spirituality, which constituted his manhood, and has given himself up to the range of the senses. And that is the way the bird lives. That is the way the brute creation lives. He and they alike live for the gratification of the appetites and the passions.

It does not require that a man should become an assassin, or a mighty criminal, before it can be said that he is unnatural. Every man that teaches himself to find the chief employments and enjoyments of his manhood lower than in his reason and moral sentiments and spiritual nature, has forsaken himself. Every man whose business is manual and physical, and who contents himself with that business, and feeds himself by nothing higher than that, is a creature that is spending his life forces lower than the level of true manhood. It is not a misfortune

to be a mechanic; but it is a misfortune to be only a mechanic. It is not a misfortune to be a farmer, but it is a misfortune to be nothing but a farmer. It is not a misfortune to be a mariner, or a day-laborer; but the man that labors, working with his hands, and never thinks any higher than his work, is unfortunate. It is a misfortune for a man to have abandoned his manhood so that the operations of his mere physical frame shall satisfy him. All the upper realm of such a man's nature has been shut up. That which distinguishes him in the creation of his Father; that which gives him the right to say, "Our Father," is all disused. It is as if a man, inheriting a magnificent palace, should shut up every one of the numerous apartments except the eating-room, and there live and feed.

How many there are that are laborious, and live, as the great mass of the human family must live, by the mere exercise of mechanical power! And that is not a misfortune necessarily. But how many men are satisfied with that! How many are contented to work, and to think just enough to get that which they shall eat and drink, and a place to eat and sleep, and a place for a little low social merriment! Their whole ambition in life is filled by these few things. They care for nothing more and for nothing further. It is that which is a misfortune. It is a misfortune that a man should have no strong ambition to make him feel that he must have something more than the animal has—mere mechanism. It is not for a man to be simply a machine. It is not for him to be content with that. It is for him to desire knowledge. It is for him by knowledge to have a larger function. It is for him to have moral sentiment. It is for him to strike through life higher and nobler conceptions and impulses. It is for him to seek out above his work, or by his work, or beyond his work, something that the soul can enjoy—something for the reason; something for the imagination; something for the moral and spiritual sentiments. That is the business of every man, no matter how poor he is. That is one reason, I think, why God has given us so much to know in nature—for nature is a man's library who knows how to seek for knowledge. Nature is every man's picture gallery who knows how to hunger after and appreciate beauty. Nature is every man's portfolio, and herbarium, and garden. Nature is full of instruction to those who have a heart for knowledge.

He, therefore, who lives so far down that his trade or profession satisfies him, is living below his manhood, and is unfortunate. And how much more unfortunate is he, if he lives in his appetites and passions, and neglects even utility. That is low enough. And if he is dissipated, and gives himself up to animal inclinations, wherein is he to be distinguished from the swine? He that roots and eats, filling his belly

only to lie in swinish filth and stupidity till hunger inspires him again —wherein does he show himself superior to the animals that do the same thing? Wherein is a man, though he is royally endowed, higher than the brutes, if he lives as they live?

The great multitude of men do live outside of, or below, their true nature. I mean not merely those who pervert it in the ways which I have been describing, but even those who pursue the ordinary avocations of respectable life. If they examine themselves, they will find that they set up aims which in the main are to please their pride and vanity and selfishness. Their great purposes in life do not rise to the supersensuous. I apprehend that if men were to sit down and write out what they mean to do and what they mean to be, the greater part of them, when they came to measure their aims by any high, true spiritual standard, would be ashamed to see how ignoble those aims are. The thing that is aimed at mostly in our day, is money. In our day men "seek their fortune." It has come to be almost a maxim, that men go into life to "seek their fortune;" to build themselves up; to get that which they think will make all men obey them, and respect them, and please them, and honor them. It is pride, vanity, avarice, love of property, in the main, that men set up as the end of life: not true manhood; not the power of wisdom; not the power of goodness; not the power of obedience to divine commands; not the power of benefaction; but the simple power of gratifying self-love, in one way and another.

Look, young men, at the scheme that you have laid out for yourselves, at what you mean to do and mean to be, and see if the aim of your life goes much higher than that which I have shown you. It is your purpose to pander to some form of selfishness—social selfishness, civil selfishness, or individual selfishness. And yet that does not reach high enough to touch even the lowest level of manhood. It leaves you still aiming at things which lie outside of true manhood.

The forces which men employ are largely forces which spring from their lower nature. The judgments which they apply to themselves, as prospering or not prospering, are judgments which are derived from this lower way of looking at manhood. I hear men spoken of as being very greatly prospered whose prosperity will not bear looking into. They are prospered; but it is by the sacrifice of their moral sense. They are prospered; but it is by the sacrifice of all refinement and delicacy. They are prospered; but it is by the sacrifice of their nobler natures. They are prospered! What do you mean by that? That they range high among men in this world, and have money, influence, power, physical excellence. Men say that a man is prospered because he has become strong and rich in these lower elements. On the other hand,

a man that has gone through sickness, and bankruptcy, and severe trials that pruned him on the right and on the left, and beat him down, until he has become patient, contented, lowly, disinterested, and is far more like his Master than ever before—such a man, instead of being regarded as prosperous, is looked upon with pity, and men say of him, "He is a ruined man!" As if, a man's boat having sunk, and he having swum to the shore, and standing strong on the land, people should say, "He is gone!" No, he is saved! His boat is lost, but not he.

All that is worth saving in manhood is that which belongs to the reason, the moral sense, and the spiritual element. There is many and many a man that has been beaten as the flail beats the straw; and the straw and the chaff have been left behind, and the wheat has been kept and put into the granary; and the men have cried as though the wheat were being left behind, and they had got nothing.

Do not men measure themselves by these false and low standards? Do they not aim at things that lie outside of the true sphere of manhood? Do they bring into operation forces and form judgments which show that they do not live outside of themselves?

Men, whenever they look into these things seriously, see and realize that their real manhood sits in judgment upon their ordinary life. If I were to preach to you to-day the doctrine of total depravity, many of you would say, "It is right," and go to sleep; and many of you would say, "It is wrong," and resist it, according to the way in which you have been educated, and according to your temperament and disposition. If I were to say that all men are sinful, and were to take the old-fashioned track, you would be somewhat interested, perhaps, for the moment, but most of you would say, "It may be theologically true; but, after all, it is an overcharged statement." And yet, is there one of you who can take his life and disposition, and bring them into judgment before his higher self, before his dispassionate reason, and justify them? Is there one of you who can say that every day his reason, at evening, looks back and approves everything that he has done? Is there one of you that does not sit in condemnation at the bar of his own judgment every single day that he lives? This first element of your higher nature, if active, is sufficient to keep you habitually under condemnation to yourselves. Your lower nature is carrying on life in such a way that the very first element of your true manhood condemns it: not in single things, but in innumerable things. Do we not all the time say, "We ought to be more under the guidance of our reason; but our feelings carry us away"? People are continually saying, "Oh! that I knew how to be more *reasonable*, that I might not make so many mistakes." Men, talking among themselves about human life, independent of theology, and without bias, admit that they act irration-

ally, seeking things of less value rather than of higher value; indulging feelings that ought not to be indulged; doing things to-day that they know they will be sorry for to-morrow; over-eating or under-sleeping; violating the laws of body or mind in a multitude of ways. They are continually conducting the affairs of life in ways that their experience teaches them to be mischievous. They are convinced of it. They cannot help knowing it. There is not a single man here to-day, who, if I should put the question to him, "Do you not live so as to be at odds with your better reason?" would not be obliged to admit that he does. If I were to call upon those to raise their hands who act in consonance with their reason, is there one of you that could hold up his hand? And if there was one that did raise his hand, would you not laugh at him, every one of you, and say, "No, he does not act so"?

Take a step higher. Do you live habitually, in your ordinary affairs, in your social intercourse, in the things that you seek and the things that you avoid, according to the dictates of your moral sense? Are you conscious that you bring to bear upon your conduct the great moral measurements, the rights and the wrongs, that have been determined by the holiest experiences of the best men of the world, and have come down to us in the records of God's word, as God's best judgments expressed through such experiences through thousands of years? Do you live in accord with them? Are you uniformly generous, uniformly unselfish, uniformly true? Is your life straight? Is your path from day to day a line drawn as true as a rule could draw it? Are you *right*-eous, or are you *unright*-eous? Measure your life by this higher moral sentiment. Is there a man who does not know that his life will not bear any such measurement as that? Every man says, "There is not a faculty that, when it acts, does not act crookedly." Take any single one of your feelings and watch it for a single day, and you will find it to be so.

When the shipmaster is steering across the sea, all the time keeping his eye upon the compass, and holding the vessel as near as he can to an exact line, it seems to him that he is running in a straight line; but he is far from it. I looked with great interest at the charts that were laid out for those yachts that crossed the ocean. They undertook to draw the shortest line between New York and Liverpool; and it seems, when you look at the record of their observations, as though they ran up and down, constantly, going in anything but a straight line, although they thought at the time that they were following a direct course.

Let a man take any one of his feelings, and chart it from day to day, and follow it, and see how zig-zag it goes; how out of proportion it is; how it is deficient here and in excess there. There is not a man

who is not obliged to say, "If I measure by this second element of manhood, I am all the time living below my manhood, and out of tune with myself."

But if you bring in the life to come, the consciousness of God ever-present, the considerations which spring from the sweet, and pure, and blessed life of holiness and love in the heavenly land; if you measure by that, there is no use of talking about it. We know so little of it that it seems like the filmiest cloud. It is not, for instance, enough, in our conception, to be used as a rule or measure. The higher men go up in true manhood, the less do they find in their practical life to please themselves withal, and flatter themselves withal, and justify themselves withal, and the more do they see that they are living lower than the line which separates between the animal and the man. Most men live below that equatorial line. Very few men get above it; and they get but a very few degrees above it. And there is not a man living, who, if he takes true manhood, and measures himself by it, will not be obliged to say, "I am altogether sinful."

My dear friends, I do not care on what theory you philosophize. I am not anxious that you should believe in sin as defined by the Arminian or the Calvinist. I do not wish to impose upon you any old or new philosophy. The main thing is that men should have such a conception of their inferiority, and of the lowness at which they are living, that they shall be brought into the conscious need of succor and help. It is for this that I am preaching. You are living below your true manhood. It is only once in a while that you come to yourself. You do once in a while.

When a truly eminent Christian man dies, and the sound of life is for a short time hushed, all your better feelings lay down their warlike feathers, and there rises up in your soul a consciousness, an ideal, of what you ought to be, and how you ought to live, for a single moment, it may be, or a single hour.

I have seen men come over from their business in New York, to attend the funeral of a brother—of some eminent Christian—and shed tears in this house. When, for instance, Brother Corning was buried, I saw hard-faced men cry. And I know what we should hear such men say if we could listen to their conversation as they walk away on such occasions. "Dear brother," says one, "we have been working for money; but that is not the main thing. It is only a little while that it can do us any good." "That is true," says another. "We must die soon. It will not be long before there will be just such a funeral for us. And are we ready?" And so these two men, gray-haired, it may be, very simple and very much in earnest, give expression to their feelings as they go down to Fulton Ferry. And as they

cross over they say to themselves, "I will think of these things, and try to carry the impression of them with me." But when they go up the street on the other side they meet this man and that man, and their minds are distracted from these serious thoughts; and when they get back into their counting-room they forget all about them. They did think they would tell their wives all about it when they got home at night; but, when at the supper-table, they were asked, "Husband, did you go to the funeral to-day?" they said, "Yes." "Was it a good funeral?" "Very, very." That was all they had to say about it! And yet, they had had a revelation. They had *come to themselves*, though it was but for an hour.

There is many a man, tired, weary, who strays away from his business, and, it may be, falls in at some concert room. Not in all natures, but in some, the imagination is stirred by music, and as they listen they are affected. They think it simply pleases them; but it does more than that. It wins them, and lifts them into finer thoughts and higher regions of contemplation. There is many a man who, as he has listened to music, has dreamed dreams, and had tears run down his cheeks. And people observing his emotion, would ask, "What! does Mendelssohn affect you?" and starting up, he would say, "Oh! Mendelssohn, was it? I was not hearing that. I was thinking of something else." Why, the man had come to himself, under the sweet bewitchment of music. All his grosser feelings had gone down, because his finer feelings had gone up, and he was judging himself, and all his ambitions and desires, by a higher standard. He knew enough to do it, and God gave him a chance; and for an hour he came to himself, and was a better man.

Now, how can we carry this coming to ourselves so as to keep it, and cast it forward, and find it to-morrow, and the next day, and every day, and thus live in our real manhood, instead of below it, in our animal manhood, or falsehood?

I have seen many a man learn more at his cradle than he ever did from the pulpit. I have seen many a brave, strong man, who could face theology, and who, if you flashed arguments on him, was not hurt by them, any more than a house is damaged by the lightning which strikes the lightning-rod, and runs into the ground. But there came into his home a stealthy preacher, without notes. A little flower that he has cherished begins to wither—and you never know how much you love anything till it begins to go out of your hand. And this strong man, this wise man, this man that you could not reason with, nor do anything with, deliquesced like a cluster of grapes that lies under the vintner's crushing foot. All his spirit was like the juice that runs out. And at last the little bird ceased to sing. And the flowers lay around

only to be rebuked as not so sweet nor so beautiful as the one little pale face among them. And he took his little child down to say farewell to it; and came back home saying, all the way, inwardly, "Oh God! *oh God!* oh GOD!" And coming to the door, there was nothing there. And going into the house, he felt how hateful everything looked that used to look so beautiful. And he was angry if the servant happened to speak; and then was ashamed because he was angry. And he did not know what ailed him. All day and all night he said in himself, "What is this life worth? What is all my money worth? What is my honor worth? Oh! if I could get back that little child again, I would give everything I have in this world."

Is not that heart-sickness? Is not that the coming of a man to himself, and saying, "My joy does not depend upon my riches nor upon my honor, but upon love." Here was this little lover nestling in the man's bosom, and God loved it, and took it, and left the father bankrupt in his heart; and he bore testimony, "I cannot be fed in my soul with bread, nor honor, nor money; I must have something higher." Here was a man that came to himself for an hour, and stood in the royalty of his divine nature, and measured his life, and all things, by a higher standard, and rebuked himself, saying, "Thou art poor, and lean, and weak, and art perishing before the moth."

Oh! who would invest property in any direction in which he could be as easily bankrupted as a man can be in his heart? And yet, you put your heart's treasure in the keeping of a child, that is liable at any moment to stumble into death. At every step you put your heart, and all you have of higher enjoyment, into the keeping of chance, which to-day is like a bubble, and to-morrow is gone as the bubble is gone. And do you suppose men do not think of these things? They do think of them; but they do not know what the meaning of them is. I tell you, it is your true manhood sitting in judgment on your common life, and saying to every one of you, "You are living outside of yourself; you are not living as God made you to live, and as you yourself know that you ought to live. You are not good; you are but a little good; you are not half good; you are hardly beginning to be good"; and you feel it to be so.

It is a glorious discontent when a man is brought to that feeling provided it works in him reformation—for we have now reached that point in your consciousness in which I think you will see, not only that the Scripture doctrine of human sinfulness is borne out by facts, but that if we are to come out of that sinfulness, it must be by a transformation that may well be called *being born again.* If a man can turn himself upside down, so that the bottom shall be at the top, and the top shall be at the bottom; if a man can live so that his whole secular nature shall

be subordinated, and his whole spiritual nature shall be in the supremacy, is he not born again? And can a man come to that state unless it is given him by the spirit of God?

My dear friends, God is not jealous. He is just as willing as you are, and a great deal more willing than you are, that you should, if you can, become eminently holy without the aid of the Holy Spirit. If any one of you can rise up and change your reason, and moral sense, and selfish disposition, you have perfect liberty to do it. There is no jealousy on the part of God that should hinder you. There is no royal way that you must walk in order to come back to yourself and to him.

My child has in the cellar what he calls a little garden; and on going down there I find that he has set his tulip bulbs in a row in the sand, and lighted tallow candles and placed one over against each bulb. And I say, "Well, my son, what now?" "Oh," he says, "I am going to raise flowers." "But," I say, "you cannot bring flowers out by candle light. You must take your bulbs out of doors where they will have the sunlight, or you can get no flowers from them." "That may do for old folks, father," he says; "but I am going to raise tulips by candle light." "Well," I say, "I have no objection to your doing it if you can. Try it; and by and by, when you have found out whether you can do it or not, you will be willing to go out and avail yourself of the sunlight."

If you think you can bring out spiritual graces without the divine quickening you need not hesitate to try it. If you do not need the influence of that divine soul which is full of attraction, which is full of beauty and blessedness, and which is waiting above, and longing to help, you are at liberty to get along without it. If you have power in yourself which is sufficient for you, there is no reason why you should not use it. It would not be transcending your right, and it would not violate any part of the divine economy, nor hurt the feelings of your Father in heaven.

But ah! when you make your first essays, and try to live by the manhood, and not by the animalhood that is in you, I think there is not one single one of you that will not by and by come out humbled, and, like a little child, say, "O Lord God! I never can do this work. Inspire me; quicken me; change me; dwell in me: I think that then I can do it; but without Thee I can do nothing." I say to you that you may try a thousand times, but you never will come into a true manhood until the spirit of God helps you. You are too weak; you are too wicked; you are too ignorant; you are too strongly bound by habit. But there is that great daylight over your head. There is the great loving heart of God. Oh! that great love of God which sounds in the heaven as the ocean sounds upon the earth, that great love of

God which stretches abroad through the universe, as the air encompasses this whole globe—that is the secret power of this whole realm; and it hungers for you, and waits for you.

Open your heart to this love. Confess your poverty, your selfishness, and your lowness of life. Ask God to lift you into your true manhood. He will hear your prayer, and will not wait till you come very near to him, before he comes to you.

And now I go back to the parable, and say, in closing, that when the prodigal first came to himself, he thought of his father, and his fatherland, and determined to go back and confess his wrong. And he made up his story. "I will go to my father," he said, "and acknowledge my fault, and ask him to forgive me and take me again, and let me be his servant." He started; but he was not permitted to go clear back before he was welcomed. The father saw him afar off, and had compassion on him, and ran to meet him. Although the father was the one that was injured, although the father was right and the son was all wrong, it was the father that went and made the concession, as it were. And when the son began his confession, the father cut it in two, and called for the robe, and the sandals, and the ring, and the feast. And there was blessedness in that man's heart. He had risen up out of animalhood into manhood; he had come to himself; his father had found him; and he was indeed blessed.

Are there not some to-day who need this call from their God? Are there not some to whom it will be welcome? Are there not some who are on the way back from their wanderings and wickedness to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls?

May God give his Holy Spirit to comfort you, and teach you, and sanctify you, that you may be born out of the old life of the flesh, and into the new life of the spirit; and that finally you may reach your Father's kingdom.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We render thanks to thee, our Heavenly Father, that we are not left to discern the truth as it shines in the face of nature. For above that which this world says, thou hast spoken to us, speaking by holy men of old; speaking chiefly by thy Son, Jesus, our Savior; and now, again, still interpreting and enlarging thy truth in our own experience; by the Holy Ghost guiding, sanctifying, and making manifest the things that belong to life. We thank thee that we are not of this world, as the flowers are that spring up, and perish, and are known no more. Rising higher than all things which thou hast made, we are destined for thy kingdom above. For us is a life beyond. We are emptied out of this life into a more glorious sphere—planted here; transplanted there; growing that we may grow better hereafter; prepared for our fruit for all that endless expansion and glory of being which the eye hath not seen, which the ear hath not heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. And yet, how great is the way through which we are passing toward our own selves. We behold our manhood in the royalty of Christ. Thou, O Jesus, wert the only perfect man that the earth has ever seen. And though thou art God, thou art man. Now in thee we behold the stature of the perfectness of manhood. To that we aspire. Through passions, through temptations, through defilements, through darkness, through weakness, through mortal hindrances, we are pressing toward it. We have not reached it yet. We see it afar off. It goes down. As the lights sink when the ship is storm-tossed, so, often, our guiding star is lost. The light by which we steer is gone. And yet, it comes again. And through storm and through night we press forward, that we may reach this mark; that we may come to this prize; that we may inherit our high calling. We desire to be like thee; yet in this mortal state we shall never reach to that blessedness. Grant that we may at least find this, that thou art guiding and teaching and disciplining, that when we drop this mortal body we may rise and be blessed in thy presence forever more perfect.

And grant that we may have, all the way through life, a tender sense of thine interest in us; that thy Spirit is working in us; that we are not left to our own reason, nor to the conveying of our own judgment and experience. We are by thy good providence created, and guided; and by thy grace we are instructed and led. Grant that we may have comfort in believing that if in a sweet and childlike spirit we submit ourselves to thy leading, none of us shall fail; that through what way soever we may be carried, all ways shall end in the blessedness above. Grant that we may see the future more clearly than we do the present, and that we may feel the invisible more powerfully than we do the visible. Loosen our hold upon the things of this life. Grant that we may take firmer hold upon the things of the life that is to come. May we learn how to set our affections upon things above, and not upon things of the earth. Grant that that mind which was in thee may be in us; and that we may be filled with all gentleness, and lowliness, and humbleness of mind. Grant that we may live not only so as to be ourselves happy, but so as to diffuse happiness on every side. May our victories in our souls cheer others' conflicts of life. May our experience be a source of consolation and hope to those who are in a dubious way. May we be firm, not for ourselves alone, but for those who need some one to guide them. And we pray that we may commune together as we travel, in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, in sweet converse of the Lord's goodness to us, and in the hope of all the happiness that is to come. May we cheer the wilderness, and, though pilgrims, rejoice in the great goodness and mercy of our God.

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt, this morning, suit thy kindness to the circumstances of all that are gathered here. Thou lookest within; and that which is shut to every outward eye is seen of thee—all sorrows, all fears, all sadness of heart. Be pleased to draw near to those who need thee to-day. Be light to them that are in darkness; be comfort to those that are in despondency. Thou knowest, O Lord, what are the wrestlings of the affection of parents in behalf of children, of children in behalf of parents, and of friends for friends. Holy are these conflicts, incited by love, and full of disinterestedness. More like thyself are we when we strive, bearing each others' burdens for one another's welfare, than in any estate that this world knows.

Grant, then, that all those who are troubled for others, may to-day find thy presence, the restfulness of thy Spirit, its strength, and its wisdom. May none, bearing their children in their arms to thee, go away saying, My Lord hath forgotten to be gracious. Grant, we beseech of thee, that those who are almost desponding, who have watched, and labored, and waited, and seen no answer, may take fresh hope, and be able to say, Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. To whom shall they come but unto thee? O Lord Jesus! may they never leave thee nor forsake thee. To thee may they come, and there may they abide. And believing thy promises, may they never cease, while life and breath shall last, to trust in thee.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw back any that are wandering, and reclaim them to better thoughts. And grant that to those that have been defiled, and are carried away from themselves, and away from honor and integrity, the way of return may not be made precipitous. Grant that we may remember those who are out of the way, even as thou didst; and that we may in our measure become merciful priests unto them, even as thou didst become a high priest touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and giving thyself for us, that we might be brought back to thee. May we not forget the lesson. May we seek to use all the force of life for the welfare of those around about us.

Be near to all those whose trouble is with themselves; who have conflicts with their passions, with their stormy tempers, with their obdurate pride; who know the better way, and seek to cover mountain sides where rocks are with the sweet growths of charity. Grant, we beseech of thee, O Lord, that they may have faith ministered to them; that they may have strength given to them, and above all things, divine influence—the indwelling of thy Spirit—that shall calm them. Thou that couldst quiet the storm—canst thou not quiet the unruly passions of the unrestful heart? We beseech of thee that thou wilt help every one that sees but a little, to keep the glimmer in his eye, and never look away, nor lose the guiding light.

Draw near to those who know themselves to be castaways, and fain would return, but are appalled at the greatness of the way, and of the difficulties to be overcome. O thou that didst give faith, comfort and cheer them, that they may have strength to take hold upon it. There is no help in themselves; they cannot rescue themselves; but thou canst be a deliverer to them, and thou canst bring them back. If they cannot themselves walk, thou canst, with everlasting strength, take them in thine arms, and bring them back; and we beseech of thee that thou wilt do it.

Are there not unanswered prayers? Are there not multitudes of prayers laid up, that yet shall break with blessings upon the heads of children, and those that are out of the way?

We beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us to be more tender-hearted one toward another, in honor preferring one another. Grant that we may set such examples before men in all things that they shall learn to love thee, and to glorify thy name.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt spread the truth through all the community; that thou wilt teach men to love evil less; to delight less in the report of evil. Oh! grant that men may rise up higher into honor, and love the things that are pure and noble, and just, and true, and right. And we pray that thou wilt help us to take stumbling-blocks out of each other's way, and put none therein. And may we all labor to make the Lord's highway a way prepared for the ransomed of the Lord to return thereon, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head.

And when we shall have served thee according to thy righteous will, when we shall have fulfilled all the duty that is apportioned to us in our feeble and limited life, grant that we may come to the hour of death with more joy than that with which children seek their couch at night. Grant that death may have no fears. May the night thereof come full of stars; and may we discern the morning just beyond, and hear the voices that call—even the voices of the Spirit and the Bride—saying, Come. And departing from this mortal sphere and all its imperfections, grant that we may rise, in the glory of the divine image, to claim our place, and be claimed, with the blessed welcome, Good and faithful servants enter into the joy of thy Lord.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

FRAGMENTS OF INSTRUCTION.

"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—JNO. VI. 12.

This is a part of one of those miracles of the Master, by which, upon occasion, when the multitude lacked food and were faint, he multiplied the loaf in a marvelous way, and gave to the necessities of them all. When they had all fed, and were set, he directed his disciples to gather up the fragments; and for this reason—"that nothing be lost." They took up "twelve baskets" full. The word in the original signifies that kind of basket in which the Jews were accustomed to carry with them their provision. For the Jews, in traveling, for fear that they would be defiled in passing through peoples or nations that were not sanctified, took their provision with them in little baskets. So they were not very large. And the multiplication of the loaf was staid very nearly at the point at which the appetite of the multitude was staid. Yet, there was a little left; and that little was to be gathered up, that nothing should be thrown away or lost.

I might, from this, discourse upon the propriety of economy and frugality; though that is not my purpose to-night, except incidentally. It is strictly in the line of this, to spiritualize it, and to gather up the fragments of truth, which is everywhere represented as bread upon which the soul feeds.

In the administration of the Gospel the minister is obliged to preach upon many stately topics, to discuss many wide-reaching principles, to bring forward doctrines in their more important applications both to the life within and to external duties. There are certain massive themes upon which he dwells, and dwells fitly. There are, however, a great many fragments, any one of which, perhaps, is not large enough for a whole discourse, but which ought not to be lost—a great many themes; a great many truths; a great many minor applications of truths; and it is to gather up some of these that I shall speak familiarly to you to-night, as I have on not a few occasions before, addressing my remarks particularly to the young.

SUNDAY EVENING, Jan. 23, 1870. LESSON: ECCL. XII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 246, 865, 1353.

There are a great many themes which ought to be taught the young in the family, and which are better taught in every Christian and well-ordered family, because there they are not only taught, but enforced by drill—and all teaching should have drill accompanying it, if possible. Above all other places, the Christian household is a comprehensive school, and it is a school that teaches that which only love can best teach, and which a mother and a father, above all others, have the patience to teach, without reproach, without weariness, and without any other reward than the well-doing of the pupil.

If the family does not teach the things of which I shall speak, then the school should. But we are peculiarly situated in this congregation. There are in these cities thousands (and of these thousands hundreds come here from Sabbath to Sabbath) for whom there is no parents' voice; who are thrown out of the family; many of whom never were blessed with a Christian-household instruction; many of whom have long since left the parental roof. And never have they derived much ethical instruction from schools. The merest rudiments of learning—and those perhaps in the harshest and severest way—have they received. There are hundreds that come within the sound of my voice every year who really have had nobody to befriend them, and to say to them what a parent should say, or what a kind and affectionate teacher should say. And though nobody can make up the deficiency, a pastor may do something toward it. It is my wish, therefore, to-night, to introduce some topics which should be taught in the family, or in the school, but which, perhaps, may be somewhat taught here—at least so far as to be better than nothing.

Let me remind you, before proceeding further, that manhood is the supreme end of our life. It has often been the theme on which I have dwelt, that we are not, in this world, so much to seek honor and wealth, as, by the acquisition of these things, to seek an end beyond them—namely, a large and true manhood. Considered even in its secular relations, that is the most important end of life; and considered in its spiritual and eternal relations, it is the great end which we are to seek. Whatever may be the methods by which we are developing our duty and our life, the thing which we should have ultimately in view is manhood in Christ Jesus.

This must be chiefly the result of what you do in early life. The habits which you form; the opinions which you embrace; the society into which you throw yourself; the tastes which grow up in you—these will modify your whole life, and probably will control it. For youth is, in the economy of providence, that plastic period in which everything takes shape easily, and then sets. As it is with lime that is meant to be set in water, or as it is with plaster of Paris which is

meant to be set out of water, which takes but a little time before it becomes solid and hard, so that what you do with it must be done soon, or it will be past your control; thus is it with youth. That period in which men receive impressions easily is their early life; and they rapidly drift away from it; and the further they go away from it, the harder it is for them to change. If you are to be men, and men in Christ Jesus, it is of transcendent importance that you begin early.

There are a hundred small things, any one of which in itself does not seem to be of much importance when compared with themes which are often discoursed to you—those which have to do with our eternal relations—but which, taken together, amount to a great deal, and are most important in their results. Let us enumerate some of these.

One of the first things that I would say to the young, both men and women, is in the homely form of a proverb—*Every one should be willing to creep before he walks.* This does not seem to be a very important thing; and yet, it is of exceeding importance. There is hardly a young man that goes out from his father's house who does not want money before he earns it. He *does* want to walk before he can creep. There is hardly a young man that goes out into life who does not want the reputation of being smart before he is smart. There is hardly a single circle in which you see half a dozen young men, that you do not see them aping something; making believe; "putting on airs," as the saying is. They wish to have the appearance of a bravery, a position, or something else, which they have not attained. They are not willing to creep before they walk. The very beginning of life develops a tendency in men to false appearances; to insincerity; to an estimation which is radically unmanly; to a desire to have what does not belong to them—what they have no right to claim by reason of anything that they are, or that they have been. To be without pretense; to desire to have only that which you can legitimately lay claim to, of praise, of sympathy, of reputation, of means—to have a manly pride, by which you shall be the factor of that which is in your own possession—that is thoroughly salutary. An honest manhood scorns pretense and appearances. These are the signs of unripeness, not only, but they are vicious, bad signs in a child.

How foolishly punishments are administered! Parents, if a child drops a precious piece of ware, and breaks it, whip him, although it very likely is not his fault; but they will see the child running through a course of insincerity without the slightest idea that that deserves chastisement. Faults ought not to be punished; they ought to be mildly checked and gently rebuked; but those traits, in the beginnings of life, which indicate the want of essential truth, and of true manliness, the parent should scorn, and should teach every young man and

every young maiden to scorn. Simplicity, truth, and willingness to stand just where you are until by legitimate means you can raise yourself away from that place—that is the beginning of manliness.

In moving forward in life, every one should be willing to be young before he is old. It is not expected of you that you will know or that you will have more than belongs to your time of life. You need not be ashamed because you do not know more than those of your age are expected to know. Above all, you need not be ashamed of frugality, in all its relations. The not being ashamed of just what one is, and just what one has, one's willingness to stand square and open on the real facts of his case, has saved many and many a young man, not merely from dishonor within, but from the most fatal damage without. For there are very few young persons who are willing to say, "I am poor." The young man that comes down to the city to try for life, comes with a seedy coat, or with a country cut in his coat; and he is ashamed of it. He ought to be ashamed of himself, rather! He brought the best he had, and that is good enough. If other people do not like it, that is their lookout. It is the best that he can afford; and he ought to have manliness enough to stand on his dignity, and to say to those who find fault with his dress, "You mind your affairs, and I will mind mine. This coat was good enough at home, and it is good enough here." But no, he worries, and frets, and chafes. He has seen some man's ape that had a fine coat, and he longs for one; but it is not within his power to get it except by some such process as materially damages him, his exchequer, and his prospects.

That is not all. It does not stop where it begins. Legitimately, he should put himself in such relations for support as his slender means will allow; but no, he is annoyed because he cannot take a first-class boarding house. He sees other men that are no better than he is do it; and it *galls him*, as he says. It *hurts his pride*. It is a kind of pride that ought to be hurt! That is a true pride which sides with a man's nobler nature, and not with his meaner nature. What if you have to go to a fourth or fifth rate boarding house? What if you have to board yourself? There is many a better man than you that has lived upon the loaf that he has bought from day to day. It is far better that you should stand square on your honesty and on your simplicity, and say, "I have just so much; I came here to make my living legitimately; and I will maintain my independence. If I have but a farthing, I will live on a farthing. I am not going beyond my means." Is not that manly? But is it the spirit that is usually manifested? Are not people ashamed of frugality? Do not people wish to put on a pretentious look?

Then they are obliged to follow it up They are involved in this

and that expense. They are led on from one thing to another, till by-and-by poverty goads them to dishonesty, and they betake themselves to dishonest ways of obtaining money. It is the shame of living according to their means; it is the shame of living poorly while they are poor, and waiting for a better day when they shall come to thrift legitimately, by their own fertility and industry—it is this that has wrecked and ruined thousands and thousands of young men.

Frugality is a beautiful quality. It is a quality of which, in itself considered, no man needs to be ashamed. And I think that abroad they understand these things better than we do. I have observed many respects in which things are better abroad than at home—although it is not the fashion to think so. For instance, there men are more willing to live according to that which they really have than they are here. They are less disposed to make a show than men are among us. Here, where men are on a democratic equality, they think that if they do not live as well as everybody else does that moves in the circle to which they belong, they are thrown out, or thrown down. They do not conceive that a man's manhood depends on his inside and not his outside life.

Keep within your means if you starve. You had better go out of life by starvation, than stay in it and maintain yourself by dishonest or indirect methods. Live within your means. If you are young, and healthy, and hearty, make two things a matter of pride: *first*, that you will not live, from month to month, one farthing in debt; and *second*, that if you can only lay up one single shilling during the year, at the end of the year you will be one shilling better off than you were at the beginning.

This is a very singular thing to be talking about in the pulpit, is it not? And yet, a young man that undertakes to follow these directions will do more for his morals than I can explain to you to-night. For, where a man practices frugality and economy, and attempts to regulate his life on such a glorious pattern as that, consider what self-denial, what courage, and what independence in the midst of taunting associates, it will require.

Do you say that these are virtues of the lower order? Yes, they may be virtues of the lower order; and yet, no man can practice them under circumstances such as I have been describing without being developed in the higher graces. How patience, how ingenuity, how industry and foresight, how all the manly graces, are developed through stubborn independence and a wise frugality on the part of the young when they are beginning life!

There is no greater pleasure than for a man to know that he is independent. And it does not require wealth to enable a man to feel so.

When a man feels, "I am neither rich nor very poor, and I have the art of living within my means," he is a prince. The satisfaction and happiness of that feeling are immeasurable. And the attempt to live in a contrary way opens the door to temptations that very few are able to resist. The mere attempt to acquire a fortune will tend to drift one into gross materialism. If that were the only object of your life, it would very likely make you stingy by-and-by. Excessive frugality would work into something else. It would lay a temptation on you to amass means. And the tendency of this temptation would be to gain more and more strength.

But remember, while you are practicing economy in life, that this is only a lower form of manhood, and that you must go on beyond it. Remember that your happiness is to spring from the qualities of your own minds and hearts, and not from the external conditions which you keep up, important as these are, as moral drill-masters.

Next, you must secure, as you go, your own education. One man cannot educate another man. Every man must educate himself. The school gives him a chance; books give him a chance; teachers facilitate and help; but, after all, the man is schoolmaster as well as scholar. He is both pupil and teacher.

Many men are said to be self-taught. No man was ever taught in any other way. Do you suppose a man is a bucket to be hung on the well of knowledge and pumped full? Man is a creature that learns by the exertion of his own faculties. There are aids to learning, of various kinds; but no matter how many of these aids a man may be surrounded by, after all, the learning is that which he himself acquires. And whether he is in college or out of college, in school or out of school, every man must educate himself. And in our times and our community every man has the means of doing it.

To begin at the lowest, many of you will be workers—not brain-workers, but hand-workers. You will be called to earn a livelihood by manual labor. You need not be ashamed of it; but, after all, a man ought not to work with his hands alone. He may begin in that way; but every man's hand ought to be taught to think; and every year he ought to work more with his head, and less with his hand. I do not blame any man for being a day-laborer, or a menial laborer; but I do blame a man when he is content to labor with his hand, and never aspires to anything beyond that—never makes that hand fuller, more industrious, more capable. Every young man who begins to work with his hand should put brains in the palm of that hand, and educate it, so that it shall become more and more potential. For, in this world, after all, that which ranks men is the brain that they have, the kind of brain that they have, and the power which they have in that brain.

And every year one should educate himself not only by drill and skill of hand, but also by the acquisition of ideas. Every year one should read more, and every year one should learn and do more.

Here is a very great fault, my young friends, with you. I do not blame you that you are jovial. You ought to be jovial. I do not blame you that you love pleasure. Pleasure is right if it be rational. It may be a moral excellence. I do not blame you that you are chatty and gay, and that you spend your time with great delight in youth. Youth is a time for enjoyment. I sympathize with all these things. But I *do* blame you that you live for these. I blame you that they are all you think about. If they were for the intervals; if they were, so to speak, the cushions that you put between the hard bones of duty; if they were relaxations, none more than I would praise you. But I am ashamed to see young men and maidens who spend their whole life in foolish garrulity, or in endlessly running after mere pleasure, or in courses that have not one single particle of upbuilding in them.

Consider what you ought to know. Every man, in this time of the world, and in this country, ought to have some general knowledge about his own body and mind. It is simply a disgrace for a man to live forty or fifty or sixty years and know nothing about his heart; nothing about his lungs; nothing about his brain; nothing about the laws of health; nothing about the effect upon his physical constitution of labor and rest and sleep. It is a matter that intimately concerns your whole prosperity. The means of knowledge are abundant and within the reach of all, now, and no man can be excused for being ignorant of that which concerns every one, as to how he himself is made, and what are the laws that regulate the mind and body. It used to be thought that these things were to be known only by physician and ministers and lawyers, and perhaps a few others; but in this democratic age knowledge on these subjects is accessible to all, and should be possessed by all.

Every man ought to know something of the structure of the earth on which he dwells, and the laws that relate to it. It is ignoble in our time to be ignorant of these things. It is not a shame that a man is poor; but if a man has been rich twenty-five or thirty years, and has extensive libraries, private or public, and numerous magazines, full of knowledge, and knows nothing of the physical globe on which he dwells, and nothing of its laws, he ought to be ashamed of that.

You ought to know something of the civil polity of your own country; something of its history; something of its economies. You ought to know something of its geography, its productions, and its climate. All these things intimately concern you, and ought to concern your self-respect. Every one of you ought to be so well informed on

these subjects that a foreigner, coming here, and falling in with you, would be able to derive from you a considerably clear and full knowledge respecting matters pertaining to your country. How many of you could give him the information? How many of you know much about the early settlement of this country? How many of you know about the immigrations that have taken place, and about the classes of immigrants that there have been? How many of you can tell the causes of the great Revolutionary struggle, or the principles that were involved in that struggle, or its principal features? How many of you can give anything like a consecutive history of the events that have taken place in the country from that time to this? How many of you can take up the distinctive American ideas and doctrines, as distinguished from monarchical ideas and doctrines? How many of you can give the geography of more than perhaps your own State and one or two adjoining States? How many of you can give any considerable idea of the climate North and South, East and West? How many of you can give anything like a complete statement of the productions of this great country? Yet it is your country, and you ought to be ashamed not to be more or less acquainted with these things. They belong to general knowledge; and they ought to be to some extent familiar to every young man, not only, but to every young maiden. For it is a part of woman's rights to be intelligent. That which young men ought to know, young women ought to know; and that which a young woman ought not to know, a young man ought not to know.

We ought to be acquainted, not alone with our own country, but, in some measure, with other countries. If we would well understand our own land, we must have some points of comparison between it and other lands. We ought to understand not only the history of our own race, but the history of mankind. The great national peculiarities; the principal epochs of civilization; the important features of history, we ought to be familiar with. And these things are easily learned. They require but comparatively little study, so have the facilities multiplied in these respects.

We ought to understand the principal elements of science; for in our day science is the substratum of life. We ought to understand the political economy of our country. We ought to understand the drift of the events of the day in which we live. All these things are within the reach of the young, if they are only hungry for knowledge; and if they do not know these things, it is because they prefer other things. See how eagerly they betake themselves to the most frivolous reading, if they read at all.

A busy man has a right to amusement, and nobody else has. A

very earnest, intense, sober man has a right to wit and mirth. That is his privilege. But a man that twitters and laughs all the time is a fool. A man that is bent on the acquisition of fact, and of principle, and of knowledge, has a right to unbend, and to read sporting papers, even—if they are decent. And certainly funny papers are not to be disallowed. There is much in them that may do a man good, as a relaxation—as an alternative. But it is painful and sickening to see a young man who makes the Sunday morning journal his classics; who studies all the things he knows out of a fifth-class trashy newspaper; who knows something about the horses that run, something about gambling saloons, and a good deal about drinking saloons, and a good deal about scandal; who reads papers that minister to his morbid appetites, to his lower passions, to the meanest parts of his nature, feculent, dripping, reeking with things that are low and unmanly. Is it not shameful for a man to give his time to reading and glozing over such contemptible stuff? Ought not a man to be ashamed to let all the great and noble themes of true secular knowledge go past him unheeded and unexplored, and spend his leisure in these miserable communings of miserable men with the most miserable parts of themselves.

When I go to the libraries and ask what are the books that are most drawn out, the information which I receive is not, I am sorry to say, creditable to the character of the young. They do not read histories. They do not read biographies. They do not read travels. They do not read scientific works. There are fifty novels taken out, where there is one solid and substantial work drawn. I have not a word to say against novels. I believe in them. I think that if they are good they are useful. I believe that they are no more to be disallowed than any other part of literature. They can be made to serve the very best ends of economy, of virtue and morality, to say nothing of religion; but a man who feeds on nothing but these—how miserable and wretched he is! These are the whips and syllabubs of life. They are not the bread nor the meat. They are the confections of life. But ought a man to sit down and eat sugar-plums for his dinner, and nothing but sugar plums? Libraries are now accessible on every side; and I am ashamed to see that there are hundreds and thousands of young men—and you know who they are, for many of you are they—who almost never go into them. You have not time? You have time for anything else that you are determined to have. Every young man has time to do what he wants to do. Where there is a will there is no trouble—not once in a thousand times. The trouble is the want of appetite; the want of manly inspiration; the absence of the feeling that ignorance is disgraceful, not to say criminal. The trouble is that you want to live in present pleasure; because you want to be happy to-day, to-morrow,

and next day. Pleasing sensations are more to you than substantial growth in manliness, in knowledge, in virtue, and in truth.

But all education does not come from reading, important as that is. Even if you should say that it is impossible for you to read (though you can read a great deal if you desire to; I do not believe for a moment that you cannot read: the fragments of your time, if they were saved, would enable you to accomplish a vast amount of reading), and if it were really impossible, a man's education might go on without books to a very considerable extent. God gave men eyes that they might see; and yet very few people see anything. I see people who walk from their house down to the ferry and walk back again, every day, week in and week out, month in and month out, but who never see anything, apparently. The most surprising things are right before them, and never excite an inquiry or a thought in them, nor lead to their acquiring one particle of knowledge. But ought a man to see the most striking phenomena of weather and not make some inquiry about it? Ought a man to see the Northern Lights dance at night merely as he would look at fireworks, and go into the house and simply say, "Yes, they were very fine, very fine?" Ought there not to be in you something that wants to know what is the cause, what is the theory, what is the philosophy of these things? Is there nobody that you can ask a question of?

A young man goes along the street. There is the curbstone. All he thinks is that it is the edge of the sidewalk. But where did that stone come from? Where is the quarry from which it was taken? What is the difference between the kinds of stone used? Some is white, and some is blue. One kind of stone is used for pavements, and other kinds for other purposes. What is the difference between them? What is the difference between brick and stone?

You pass through one street in which men are laying pavement of wood. Where did this wood come from? Why do they use pine rather than beech? What is the effect of saturating the wood in asphalt? You do not know. The only thing you observe is that men are at work there, that they are making a smooth road, and that it smells bad! Ought there not to be some inquisitiveness, some questioning about these things?

In another street men are putting down the Scrimshaw pavement. There is a good deal for a man to think about in that—a good deal for me to think about, at any rate. I like to stand and watch the workmen; and if they are intelligent, I like to question them. And an intelligent man likes to be questioned. I never saw a man that was doing anything well, who was not fit to be my schoolmaster, and who could not tell me something that I did not know. And there is nothing like an

ingenious youth that wants to learn, for asking questions. What was your tongue put into your head for? There are two rules about asking questions. Never ask a question when you can help it; and never avoid asking questions when you have first tried to answer them for yourself, and found that you cannot. Never ask anybody to untie a knot for you till you have exhausted your power and skill upon it. When you have satisfied yourself that you cannot do it, then you may ask somebody to do it for you.

You see men, after a snow-storm, distributing salt on the car-track. I say to you, "What is that for?" "Why," you say, "to melt the snow." "But how does the salt melt the snow?" "Well—it melts it!" It is certainly true that it does; but that is not a very intelligent answer. Ought you not to be able to explain such a thing as that?

Take plate glass. Where do these magnificent glasses come from that are four feet one way, and six feet the other, all in one solid sheet, and so pure that when you look through them you do not know that there is glass there? How is the glass made? Is it rolled, or cast, or blown? What is it made of? What are the materials which go into the composition of different kinds of glass? In what countries are they most facile in the manufacture of glass?

Take colors. What is color? What is this particular color? Men look at it, and say, "It is pretty, is it not?" That is all they have to say about it. Is that manly? Does such a course as that command your self-respect? You smile; and yet, when you smile do not you smile at yourselves? Do not you do the very things which I have been inveighing against?

I hold that if a man has eyes, and ears, and a tongue, and he chooses, he can find out something every day he lives. You ought not to go home at night without having learned something to put down in your journal, and something worth knowing. You have had a poor day if you have not reaped something. Sometimes the fisher comes back without a fin, and the hunter without a feather; but no man who is a hunter or fisher for knowledge ought to come back without his pouch or basket full every single night.

In crossing the ferry, I like to stand by the pilot (whom I find to be very gentlemanly) and talk with him; and the river is not broad enough, and the trip is not long enough, for the information that I can gain. And I frequently go down into the hull of the boat. I would not recommend you all to take such liberties; but I find in the engineer and in his machinery much to interest and instruct. I could talk with him all day, or all night, about the different kinds of engines and boilers; about the different principles on which they operate; about the different manufacturers; about the running of the boat in winter and

summer; about the life he leads down there; about his way of looking at things; about a thousand matters that he is familiar with, and I am not.

It is interesting to talk with the deck-man. How much he can tell you of people that go across the ferry at all the hours of the day—of those that go earliest in the morning, and those that go a little later, and those that go still later! How much he can tell you of how the different classes appear! There are a multitude of questions that you can ask him, and as many things that he can lecture you on, if you have a tongue to ask, and an ear to hear.

Life is full of sources and opportunities for acquiring information. There are facts concerning men, and animals, and vegetable growths, and manufacturing processes, and economies, thousands of them, which it is worth your while to acquaint yourself with. You could draw out volumes and volumes of these things if you would avail yourself of the opportunities which are constantly presented to you.

Not only ask questions, but when you have asked a question go and read about it. When you have seen something that has excited your curiosity, and you have asked a question about it and got some information, and made a minute of it, you are in just the right state to go to some library where there are encyclopedias, and ask for what you want. If you do not know what to ask for, hunt up some man that does, and get him to tell you. Pursue the thought till you have searched it out.

Do you suppose you could follow such a course as that for five or ten years and not be well educated? It is not necessary that a man should go to a college or an academy to be well instructed in a thousand things that it is well for a free, democratic citizen of America to know.

There used to be an impression that certain things belonged to certain classes. That has all passed away. One of the peculiar, though unexpected and indirect, results of democratic influences, is that professions are no longer close corporations. Once nobody was expected to know about mechanics except the mechanic, but now everybody is expected to know about them. Once the doctor was the repository of all the knowledge of health and disease in the community; but now every well-read householder ought to have a general knowledge of medicine. Once the lawyer knew all the law that was known; but now every well instructed business man has some considerable knowledge of law as it relates to his particular business—and he ought to have. Everybody has a right to know what anybody has a right to know. You have a right to steal everybody's trade, and to pick everybody's pockets of knowledge. You have a right to know what the doctor knows.

You have a right to know all that the judge knows—no, not *all*, but whatever things rightfully belong to the profession of a judge! You have a right to know anything that is becoming in a man and a citizen.

This leads me to say a word in respect to the company which men keep. You often hear men speak of bad company; and you are often warned against bad company; but there is a shade of thought different from that which I wish to urge upon you; namely, that while you do not attempt to get into company above your station in life, you should not let your vanity lead you to select inferiors for your companions, so that you can shine upon them. Pick your company from among those whom you are conscious are superior to you, and that can teach you something. It may perhaps pique you to be obliged to feel every day how inferior you are; but it will serve manliness in an eminent degree. Therefore let your friend be half a head taller than you are. Learn to look up for your company, and life will go well with you; but if you have to look down for your company, it will go ill with you. After all, it is this unconscious, incidental, sympathetic communication between mind and mind that works most powerful changes in taste and temperament, and that works in the way of knowledge. There is nothing that excites such electricity as mind rubbing on mind.

While pursuing your education—and your own thoughts will give a larger expansion to this matter than I have time to give it now—remember that it is not enough for you to be educated simply in knowledge. Because you are a citizen of no mean republic, and because you are men, it is right for every one of you to aim at refinement. By *refinement* I understand, comprehensively, the bringing to bear of reason and the imagination upon qualities and things in such a way that you see finer elements in them than otherwise you would see; finer than your senses see; finer than your common reason sees. Do not suppose that refinement belongs to any place, or to any class. I admit that a man is better helped to be refined if he has the advantages of refined society; if he belongs to certain professions in which refinement is current; or if he has certain lines of education. In other words, there is a greater facility for gaining refinement under these circumstances. But a man is not to be refined because he is a minister, nor because he is a lawyer, nor because he is a legislator, nor because he is an artist. He is to be refined because it is good for manhood to be refined. And it is just as good for manhood at the bottom as it is for manhood at the top. Are you a carpenter? Are you a mason? Are you a daylaborer? Do you drive a cart? Do you sweep the street? What do you do? Do you dig? Do you delve? You ought to be refined, not because of your trade, but because of

yourself. It is your manhood that needs refinement, and you have a right to it. It is not a thing, thank God, in our day and nation, that can be sequestered, and become the badge of any particular class. There is that inherent right, and there ought to be that expectation and endeavor clear down to the bottom of society. It belongs to everybody, in every calling. You may be genteel and courteous, you may have refined tastes, you may be a gentleman, though you are a mechanic; though you are the lowest of laborers. I see, not unfrequently, as fine specimens of gentlemanliness in the humbler walks of life, as I see in the higher. I have seen as true manliness, and as true ladylikeness, in humble servants, as I have seen anywhere.

I remember a poor colored man who earned his livelihood by sawing wood from house to house, and who was a real gentleman, Virginia bred. No governor was ever more truly polite than this poor old broken-backed sawyer. He was gentlemanly in speech, in manner, in gesture, in the whole attitude of his mind, by which he respected himself, and sought to deal courteously and refinedly with others. He was a *gentleman* in the true sense of that word.

There is no reason why a man should not be a gentleman if he stands at the forge, if he stands in the tannery by the vat, or if he stands in the shop by the tool-bench. There is no reason in the world why a man in the lower walks of life should not be a gentleman in manners, in speech, and in courtesy of thought and feeling. And I long to see the day when it shall not be deemed necessary for a man to have what is called "social position" in order to be refined and gentlemanly.

In this matter, do not overlook the importance of good manners. Good manners are not, of course, the same as virtues; but they stand very closely allied to virtues. There seems to be with many an impression that honesty and frankness require a species of gruffness and rudeness. The young—particularly those that are less cultured than they might have been—have the impression that there is a kind of manliness in being rude and blunt. There is not. It is a misfortune for a man to have rude manners, no matter where he is or who he is. A shipmaster on the sea, or a collier in the mine, is all the better if he has courteous manners—and he may have them. It lies with him to possess them. Social harshness has nothing in it that is beneficial, in any way of looking at it. In all things, remember that true politeness, and the source of true good manners, is a Christian, generous sympathy.

I think the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians is the most perfect description of a gentleman that ever was written or thought of. It is Paul's representation of love. If you will substitute *politeness*

for *love*, you will see that this is so. Not that I would reduce love to politeness; but while that chapter, as it stands, is the most glorious chant that ever was chimed out of the belfrey of inspiration, it has a peculiar significance in this connection if we say *politeness* instead of *love*.

"Politeness suffereth long and is kind; politeness envieth not; politeness vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil' —and so to the end of the chapter.

The beginning of good manners, the beginning of politeness, is the inspiration of a true, pure, generous, loving heart. And that every man ought to have. And where a man has that, it will overflow, and show itself in his countenance, in his manners, in his dress, in everything about him.

Let me say to those whose way of life calls them into its harsher relations, that it is becoming in every young man to cultivate chivalry. There is chivalry yet in the world, though it does not exist in the same forms that it once did. There are opportunities for a man not only to have a high bearing, but to become the knight of the weak and those that are despoiled. Young man, always take the side of the weak. It may sometimes subject you to ridicule; but, after all, taking one thing with another through life, that man who is all the time looking to see which way the strong are going, and going with them, will, you may depend, split upon a rock. If you would be generous, bold, brave, and truly manly, side with the weak. Make that the rule. There may be exceptions, but you will find them out.

What opportunities are there? A great many. You are an apprentice. There comes into the shop a poor green country boy. The old hands are disposed to play tricks on him. He is homesick. They laugh at him. He is awkward. They jeer him. They have all manner of sport at his expense. They make him very wretched. Take his side. Take the side of the weak. Take the side of the unfriended. The brutality of breaking in apprentices in the shop is only equalled by the brutality of breaking in new students in college. Some of our colleges, which have in them young men that represent the best families in the country, show what brutality there is in human nature. In American society the grossest and most shameless outrages and indignities are perpetrated on those just entering upon college life or apprentice life, that appeal to every instinct of honor in their elders. And you ought to be ashamed of it. Every man ought to be ashamed of it. If there is anything that would make my blood boil, and fight quick, and take the side of the weak, it is such things as that. I do not counsel you to fight, but if you ever *do* fight, fight for those that are weaker than

you are—fight for the woman; fight for the child; fight for the poor old man. No matter if it is unpopular, take the weak side. Although it may be to your disadvantage for the hour, it will be to your advantage in the long run; for it will make you a man.

Do not despise etiquette. There are many who say, "I believe in kindness; I believe in downright good manners; but as to all this etiquette, these French manners, and so on, I do not believe in them." Of course, etiquette carried to excess is not desirable; but it is not a particular fault in American society. With the progress, the succession, of American ideas, we are disposed to throw away reverence for the aged, respect for our superiors, refinement of address. I was struck, when abroad, with the good manners which I saw, and could not help contrasting them with the want of good manners which I felt existed in my own country. There is a frank American address; but there is among us a want of courtesy and consideration. Life is made a great deal pleasanter, intercourse is made a great deal smoother, if men observe the little forms of propriety in life, which may not mean a great deal, but the absence of which is more felt than the presence of it. It is very little to say "Good morning," and yet, if every time you meet a friend or a neighbor you look him fair in the face and say, "Good morning, my friend," if it is morning, or "Good evening, my friend," if it is evening, is not the effect which is produced very different from that which is produced if when you meet a man you hardly look at him, and pass on? Is there not a difference in his feeling? Is there no difference in yours?

You go into a store. Does it make no difference in the long run whether you think, "This man is a trader, and I came to buy, and it is his business to give me my money's worth," and you say, "Here, have you got such an article," and pay for it, and go out; or whether you greet the man courteously, and in a respectful way ask for what you want, and give him the salutation as you leave?

In Paris, when I went into a store, the proprietor, who was sitting as I entered, rose, and bowed, and bade me good morning. I thought it was probably some acquaintance of mine that I did not recognize. I bowed, and waited for him to talk to me, but found that it was only the courtesy of the shop, and proceeded to make my little purchases. I was served with great kindness and consideration; and when I left, all that were in the store bade me good morning. I said to myself, "Singular! singular!" and I was ashamed that it did seem singular.

I am sure that such are not the manners of my country. Here men are frequently gruff, indifferent, and rude. Indeed, they often practice rudeness, or fall into habits of coarse, rough ways, on purpose. And the same fault to some extent characterizes our cousins of Britain. These

things are not well. They are neither refined nor becoming The habit of acting as though you felt interested in other people's happiness, will by and by make you really feel interested in other people's happiness. And there are so few things which remain in the form of etiquette, that you cannot afford to despise and dispense with those few. This is particularly noticeable in the want of respect, not only for the aged and for superiors, but for women.

"But," you say, "Americans are celebrated, the world over, for their respect for women." No, they are not. Americans are famous for their respect for *ladies*, but not for *women*. If there comes into the cabin a very sweet and comely young lady, well dressed, there are a dozen persons who are more than willing to offer her a seat. If the car is crowded, and a stately maiden comes in and walks through, a great many men feel called to offer her a seat, because she is a *lady*. But when a poor Irish woman, poorly clad and weary, walks through the car or the cabin, nobody cares for her, because she is only a *woman*. If it were a *lady*, a seat would be offered her at once.

Now, I say that you ought to respect *womanhood*. No matter how a woman looks, she is of the same sex as your mother, as your sister, as your wife if you are married, and as your daughter if you have children. I feel, to the very depth of my being, that womanhood itself, without regard to the frivolity of some, without regard to the stains of others, and without regard to age, is essentially to be respected, and that that man is less than a man who does not feel the instinct and the sentiment, and does not act according to it.

One word more. You should cultivate the habit of uniform generosity in all your intercourse in society. I do not say that it will bring you a reward that will be visible, and that you will see—though it will The habit of taking care of others, of having consideration for the happiness of all that you go with, is wholesome. It would be a good thing if every time a young man starts upon a journey he should say to himself, "I mean to study to make other people happy, from the beginning of my journey to the end. I mean to train myself to improve every opportunity to do the thing that is right and proper for other people, and not for myself. If you had traveled as much as I have; if you had scrambled as much as I have for seats, and for the best ones—for bad manners are contagious; if you had traveled as much as I have on steamboats and seen how people that are most decorous at home, when the bell rings, and there are to be two tables, rush through the cabins and down stairs to their meals, you could appreciate the necessity for a reform in this matter. But I do not think you need go to steamboats or railway depots to be convinced of this. If you have been invited to fashionable parties, and seen what pigs

men make of themselves who are well fed at home; how they behave at the refreshment table; how they lose their self-respect, you do not need any further argument on this subject. It is owing to a want of consideration. It is not that they are so essentially selfish. They are persons that at other times really think of other people's welfare. They are persons that are actually kind and generous in their impulses. But I observe that under such circumstances men lose all their training, and forget themselves. And it is worth every young man's while to begin life with this thought: In all my intercourse, at home, in the steamboat, on the cars, wherever I am, I will never lose sight of the fact that it is my business to seek others' welfare as well as my own; to care for others, and not for myself alone. You will find that it is the law of God and humanity. You will find that it is the law of growth in true manliness.

I have picked up a few fragments of instruction. I believe that there could be more than twelve baskets full gathered of these loaves.

In closing, let me say, these things are not unimportant in a religious point of view. All these duties which I have enumerated imply self-denial, forethought, acting upon a higher principle than mere selfishness. These are but inflections of benevolence. They are a part of the general canon, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." And he that is drilling himself in these minor particulars, is preparing himself to accept that higher law in all its fulness. And, on the other hand, he who accepts that higher law, and believes himself to have become a Christian, cannot afford to stand upon a principle. He must carry it out in its details, and fill up life with these exemplifications of this great law of love.

Nowhere else is this more beautifully taught than in that passage which I have read so often, which I have so often urged upon you, and which I would have you write in large letters above your desk—"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

May God, by the whole discipline of life, make you to grow in virtue, in truth, in purity, and in benevolence, and bring you at last where you shall need no more instruction, in the perfected land, through Christ, our Redeemer. *Amen.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Ever needing, and ever supplied by thy abundance, we have learned to look up to hee, O Lord, our God, in every time of need. We have learned to look more often in thanksgiving for mercies which descend before we ask them, than in supplication for mercies withheld. For thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask thee; and thou dost delay only that we may ask, and, asking, be blest. Thou art making our benefits gifts, and gifts of love; and they come not to our senses, to make us selfish, but to our honor and to our heart to make us full of generous and filial love and reverence. We thank thee that thou hast thus coupled our mercies with thy gifts, so that thou art sovereign; so that we look up for our good, and not downward, and are redeemed from the thrall and from the reign of the appetites and the passions. Seasoned are all these things with the thought of God, and with a humble dependence on thy power. For all the way in which thou hast led us, for all thy rebukes, for our instruction, for our suffering, for our hope and joy, for all the blessedness and for all the sadness of life, alike, we thank thee. This mingled mercy and discipline thou hast administered for our good.

Accept our confession of sin—that we have been so slow to learn; so hard to feel; so unwilling to change; so obdurate and worldly, stumbling in a plain way; learning little even by our downfall; requiring the same treatment over and over again. We have lain heavily on thine hands. Thou hast been patient with the burden; but we are ashamed that we have been so indocile; that we have been so slow to learn, and slower to practice that little which we have learned.

And now we desire, O Lord our God, to be stirred up by thy Spirit, and, for the time to come, to be more apprehensive; to be more vigilant; to be more sincerely earnest; to follow thee more patiently and more in the spirit of little children learning from parent lips.

Be pleased to sanctify to us all the administrations of thy providence. Grant that all things may work together for good to us. May we find ourselves in life filled with a sense of thy kindness and of thy mercy, so that from day to day there may be some argument of thanks. May our hearts, no longer selfish and proud, but rendered sensitive to the mercies of God, discern, even in the darkest day, something for thanks. And may this be the spirit of our life. May we constantly draw near to thee with grateful hearts. And we pray that thou wilt teach us, since we are pensioners of thy bounty, to be almoners of this joy which thou givest to us. And grant that we may distribute it to others. Freely have we received; freely may we give.

And we pray that thou wilt bless us in all the relations of life—in our households; in our friendships; as citizens in the discharge of secular duties. Going out and coming in, may we still be in the spirit of our Master. May we be patient. May we be faithful even in little things. May we learn to do the will of God. May we live in this life as expectants of a better life. May we discern here the seeds and beginnings of eternal growths. And we pray that we may never be weary in well doing, nor, having begun a Christian life, turn away from it to seek again the poor and beggarly elements of this world.

Bless all those that are teaching in our midst: all that are in the Sabbath school, whether teachers or scholars; all that are in Bible classes; all that go forth to carry the tidings of truth to those that are in iniquity. Inspire a benevolent disposition in every heart, and guide that disposition to all acts of kindness. May we learn to live together with more gentleness; with more joy; with more sincere, unaffected, and continuous unfoldings of the divine life.

And we pray that thou wilt grant, as we journey toward the grave, that we may have assurance from day to day, so that when the hour comes, it shall not come bringing clouds and fears, but joy and peace that shall grow deeper and deeper till at last the disquietudes of this world shall melt into the everlasting peace of the world to come.

And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word which we have spoken. Grant that it may be a word in season, awakening thought, inspiring new resolution, and quickening endeavor. Save the young from themselves; from their tempters; from their ensnarers. We pray that there may be more and more inspiration of truth and nobleness and courage and purity; more and more desire for knowledge: more and more industry in acquiring it; more fellowship one with another. May we condescend to men of low estate. May we count others better than ourselves. May we love each other fervently and increasingly in all our relations one to another. Grant that we may be quickened by thy divine Spirit, not only so that we may bei n love one with another, but so that all our earthly affections may be sanctified by thine. With this overruling love of God in our hearts, may we be kept from all inordinateness and impurity. And when thou hast done with us here below, bring us to thine own presence, and the joy of thine heavenly kingdom. And we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. *Amen.*

THE SUBSTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."—EPH. III. 17–19.

This is a part of the prayer for the Ephesian disciples by Paul. How sublime it is! It reveals the very interior of Paul's heart, when he opened it to the sight of God. Philosophy never before or since sprang from such a court as this. For this is not the gush of mere enthusiasm. It is the enthusiastic utterance of the profoundest philosophy.

Here is the sum and substance of Christianity: *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* It is the whole of Christianity; that is to say, it is the whole of it in the same way that an acorn is the whole of a tree. Out of that seed-form everything else will develop, according to that divine law which is divinely included in it. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know"—what? The whole nature of God? The whole science of human government? The whole moral theory of the world?—"and to know the love of Christ," which passeth knowledge. That is, no intellection can ever follow the outgush of experience, and reproduce it in the form of ideas. While the intellect may interpret the experience of the heart, it after all stands afar off from it, and never can partake of the experience itself. It passes knowledge. "And to know the love of Christ, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." This is the very supreme of philosophy. It touches the lines and foundation elements of Christianity.

Christianity differs from all other religions, not in the fact that it commands a worship—for all do; not simply in the superior view which it gives of God; but by demanding a peculiar condition of heart toward Christ. Other religions demand reverence, and worship, and obedience, and uprightness—that is all. Christ is said to be "the end of the law." In other words, that which the whole law means is comprised in him. Therefore it is said, again, that he is "the fulfilling of the law"—its whole outcome.

SUNDAY MORNING, Feb. 6, 1870. LESSON: EPH III. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 100, 216, 551.

The old Jewish law had its secret spirit; but it was hidden in a vast system of forms. That spirit broke out in Christ Jesus in a living exposition of itself.

In winter there is scarcely a thing that is more homely than an apple-tree; but in June, when it is covered with blossoms, is there anything more exquisite than that same tree? That tree in winter is the old Jewish law. Christ is the old Jewish law all blossomed and coming to fruit.

I always feel sad when I think of a modern Jew, who loves the history of his fathers, and is proud of the name of *Hebrew*, and clings to the Old Testament Scriptures. He does not cling to them any more tightly than he ought to; but I feel sorry that he cheats himself of the right and part and lot that he has in the New Testament, which is but the unfolding of the principles and truths of the Old Testament. The Jew has as much right to the New Testament as we have. It is the property of the Hebrew, and is derived historically from the faith of the Hebrews. Christ was a Hebrew. The principles which he enunciated had already been enunciated in the faith of his fathers. And it seems to me that the Jews cling to the seed, and will not take the harvest which has grown from that seed, when they reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian religion is not a system of laws. It is a state of the heart. The Christian religion is not a philosophy of truth as it relates to man's nature and duty. It is a soul-life. It is not an inventory of truths as they existed before man came into the world, and will exist after he passes away. The Christian religion, in respect to each particular man who believes in it, is a state of facts in his own consciousness. *Christ in a man*—that is the Christian religion. It is Christ dwelling by love in his heart, or dwelling in his heart by faith. Out of this will grow many doctrines, and many inferences: but it is the seminal form, the germinant element, in Christianity. It is the personal relationship of the individual heart to the Lord Jesus Christ as its supreme Head and Lover. That not only makes a man a Christian, but brings him into the central point of the Christian system. Everywhere in the New Testament this one element stands forth—the personal identification of the human heart with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The forms of expression are as many and as rich as are the forms which vegetable life takes on in the tropics. All the occupations of life yield whatever they have in them that touches the heart, in figures, or in words (that are latent figures), to bring out this idea. All the habits of higher love, all the analogies of sustentation of life in the body; all civic, economic, juridical, domestic traits—these are borrowed

to expand and enforce this idea—the supremacy of allegiance and of love toward the Lord Jesus Christ, who is light; who is bread; who is water; who is wine; who is meat; who is the vine, we being the branches; who is the householder; who is the law-giver; who is the shepherd; who is the father; who is the friend; who is the lover; who is judge; who is leader; who is God over all, blessed forever, occasionally mounting up out of all these lower forms into this higher one. And whatever there is in day or in night that is sweet and soothing and nourishing to domestic love, is sanctified by being transferred to a higher function and use in the illustration of this noble experience of the soul of each individual man with its head, Jesus Christ. This heart-allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ is to each one of you all the Christianity that you can have.

Outside of personal experience, Christianity is but a pale reflex—a lunar rainbow—watery and faint colors produced by the light which the moon has borrowed from the sun, and which, compared with celestial rainbows, are scarcely worth looking at. All Christianity which does not include personal experience, is but a lunar rainbow. It takes the sun to make a rainbow that is worth looking at, and that any boy will try to chase. All Christianity that lies outside of the interpretation of personal experience, is, in common with all religions, every one of which has in it some particles of truth, defective in this regard.

There are three ways in which the New Testament recognizes Christ, as represented to us;—three instrumentalities by which we apprehend him, and come to a knowledge of him—the senses, the intellect, and the heart.

The primitive disciples came to Christ by sight. That mode was very much counted on in their day, and has been very much longed for since. We have, every one of us, doubtless, wished that we might once behold the Saviour in a dream that we could believe to be a revelatory dream; and still more that we might see him as an angelic presence. To *see* the Lord was considered among the apostles as being so important that Paul himself said, in an argument to one of the churches, "Have I not *seen* him?" He was met by the envies and jealousies which prevailed even among the apostles. He was made to be inferior to the others because he came in afterwards, and had not consorted with the Lord in companionship; and he said, "Nevertheless, I saw him when I was converted. When going to Damascus, did he not appear to me? I have seen Him as well as the other apostles." A great deal was made of the fact of having beheld the personality of Christ. It is very grateful; but after all, it does not amount to as much as we are apt to think. They that had seen the Lord were not helped as much as many persons who had not seen him. The sev

ereignty of Christian experience was not to be looked for in the earlier ages. There have been developments of Christ in human life far transcending the experience of the primitive church. In later days, there are many thousands who live by faith, and not by sight. Blessed are they who believe, not having seen—Christ himself being interpreter in that matter.

But Christ may be presented to us in a purely intellectual point of view. There is much in a divine person which the intellect takes cognizance of; and if we exercise without arrogance, and within due bounds, this capacity of intellectual apprehension, it is an aid—it is an important guide. More than that, there can be no perfect and enduring conception of Christ which does not involve in it, to a certain degree, an intellectual element. It is not the leading one; it ought not to be the prime one; but as an auxiliary, the presentation of Christ as he can be apprehended, or as any being can be apprehended, by the intellect, is of very great importance. This intellectual definiteness; the reduction of vague feeling to the form of ideas; the giving them some sort of order and proportion and emphasis—all this is a very important preparation for the heart's own work. It restrains feeling within its proper channels. The intellect exerts a salutary influence upon enthusiasm, which attempts to burn itself to ashes. When rightly used, the reason does not become the rival and the substitute of the feelings, but only their educator and their friend. It is the reason which enlarges and enriches and directs. The understanding and the feelings reciprocate. For no man can be well educated who has not in his intellect the color and the inspiration and the warmth that the sentiments and emotions give.

But the stress of Scripture is laid, not upon receiving Christ because we have seen him, nor upon receiving him because we understand him when he is expounded to us, but upon receiving him *by faith*. And this is the part of our text which I have emphasized—"*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*" This is the Pauline aspiration.

As Christ is not visible, he of course must be brought before us by the imagination. We cannot love nothing. We cannot love vacuity. There must be some conception of a thing before we can give our hearts out toward it. And if it is Christ that we love, or wish to love, there must be some conception of Christ. This is one mode of faith—namely, the power to reproduce that which the senses ordinarily see, but without the use of the senses. This is the exact definition that is given to it by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews. "Faith," he says, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." That power of the mind by which we bring definitely and

clearly before us invisible truths, whether they be truths of quality, truths of person, or truths of place, that power which enables us to see what the senses cannot see, is one mode or form of faith; but that is not its full form, as the term is freely used. For we find that faith is a generic, and that there are specifics in it. *Faith that works by love* is the faith that saves the soul and sanctifies the life. The largest and best way of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, is to take him in such a sense that our souls go out to him in the form of love. It is such a presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the imagination, to our minds, as draws forth toward him the soul's enthusiasm and secret life. It is the personal allegiance of love to Christ. A perception of his grandeur of nature, of his beauty, of his sympathy with us, of his supreme excellence in every part—such a perception that we clasp him with our feelings, that we put our souls wholly under his influence—this is receiving Christ by the heart.

There are three ways, then, by which Christ can be presented to us: 1. By the senses. That we shall not have again on earth. 2. By the intellect. That is the presentation of Christ doctrinally or theologically. 3. By the heart. That is the reception of Christ by the form of an actual experience; by such a coöperation of the reason with the imagination that we are able to bring the invisible person near to us, and so bountifully reproduce him, and so beautifully set him forth, that he becomes to us the "chiefest among ten thousand," and the "one altogether lovely;" so that every sweet thing in us goes out to him as every dew-drop in the sunshine evaporates and goes up toward the sun. This is receiving Christ by faith. It is not the rejecting of the senses; it is the non-using of them, rather. It is not the despising of the reason; it is an auxiliary use of the reason. But it is the manly way of taking hold of the Lord Jesus Christ by the enthusiasm of love, and making him the supreme object of our desire, and of our allegiance. This is receiving Christ by faith; and if we continue so to receive him, then he dwells in our hearts by faith—that is, by heart-sanctifying love.

This I understand to be the distinctive peculiarity of Christianity, not only, but that without which there cannot be any Christianity. There can be no Christianity to the man who does not personally take Christ by faith. There is no substitute for this personal experience, and there can be no system of Christianity which does not provide for this personal experience, toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

I remark, then, in view of this exposition, that,

1. Any system which leaves out the central figure is not Christian, and has no right to wear that name. It is not enough for any system of truth which is preached, that it thinks well of Christ, and sees in Him many estimable traits, and regards Him as a man

beyond all ordinary men, and something, perhaps, angelic—far up, it may be, above any other one that ever lived on earth. It is not enough to say that He revealed a higher ethical system than ever was revealed before, or gave a better basis for worship than ever was given before. This is all well; but it does not constitute Christianity. It does not make a Christian system. The thing that makes Christianity is the teaching of Christ as the object of supreme allegiance to every individual heart. It is the identification of the divine nature with your nature. That is the peculiarity of Christianity. Every man is a part of God by faith; and Christ is that God revealed, possible to apprehension, brought into sympathetic and enjoyable conditions, so that every human understanding can get hold of him. It is this enthusiastic identification of your personality with God's in Christ Jesus, that is the seal, the discriminating test, of Christianity. It is not worship. All things worship. It is not obedience. Obedience belongs to all systems. It is this personal fusion, this use of the Lord Jesus Christ to identify him with the experience of every living man, that makes men Christians, not only, but that constitutes the genius of Christianity.

Now, how superlatively, preposterously absurd, is that man who, calling himself Christian, teaches a system which derogates, which denies, which brings down and destroys, the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ, reducing Him to the level of a man! I do not undertake to say that there is not a point in philosophy where such a question may be raised; but the moment Christ is undeified—if he is undeified—that very moment the undeifier ought to give up the title of *Christian*. For Christianity consists in such an enthusiastic love of the individual human heart for Christ, that they are unified; that there is a substantial, indissoluble oneness between them, as there is between the child and the parent; and that it is the cause of all the after life and action of the individual person. If that is denied, Christianity is denied. If Christ is so expounded that such an experience is impossible, Christianity is destroyed in the destruction of the very fundamental idea of Christ.

What, then, shall we think of Christians whose faith is that they do not believe in Christ? What is a Christianity out of which Christ is taken. If it were possible, by a very skillful surgical operation, to open the head of a man, and deftly take out his whole brain, and every particle of his nervous system, without destroying any other function, and close up the head, and have life go on, the man eating and sleeping and walking and working, what that body would be compared with a full man, that is Christianity when Christ is taken out, compared with Christianity when Christ is left in. And many men reason on this subject in such a way as almost leads one to suspect that this operation has been performed on them!

I say this not in any spirit of offence. I say it not in any spirit of controversy. I simply take the ground that there can be nothing more plain than the teaching in the New Testament, that Christianity consists in such a view of Christ as induces an enthusiastic and personal allegiance to Him: and that the destruction of that personal allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, is the destruction of the whole, so that there is nothing left. Christianity, when you have taken that away, is what a tree is when you have cut it off by the roots.

To still hold on to the name under such circumstances, is cowardly. It would be still more uncharitable to say that it is stupid. At any rate, it is either stupid or cowardly. To have destroyed everything in Christianity that makes it distinctive; to have obliterated its genius; to have put the fire of obliteration on the very point of vitality, and burned it out; and then to go on calling one's self a Christian for the sake of all the advantages which accrue from the prejudices of the community in favor of the name of *Christianity*—that is cowardly or stupid. It is far better that a man who is bound to give up the substance of Christianity should also give up the name, and take the name of *Theism* or *Naturalism*, or any other name that he pleases. But all those that believe in Christianity must, it seems to me, logically and joyfully go back to this one central truth, that Christ is God over all, blessed for ever, and that the revelation of God in Christ is such a revelation as makes it possible for our hearts to rise up in communion with Christ, and clasp him with affection and fidelity, and make Him our Head and Center, our supreme All, forever and forever. Christianity is the permission of God to your soul, and my soul, to take Christ as our everlasting and adorable Friend.

2. As the Christian system is not held by those who leave out the central figure, so every Christian system is imperfectly held by those who only hold it in a philosophical form. This latter mode is far in advance of the former, which I have just been criticising; but still, the holding of the Lord Jesus Christ speculatively and philosophically, the teaching of Him only technically and psychologically in this way, is so imperfect a holding of Him that it cannot for a moment compare with the full-orbed glory of Christianity as it is set forth in the earliest narratives and teachings of the New Testament.

I would not underrate the value of an intellectual conception of Christ; but I would hold it as an auxiliary and as a guide. The intellect cannot fulfill the conditions of Christianity. It is the *heart* by which a man must believe unto salvation. It is not Christ as analyzed, as stated in technical terms, that ever will affect a man. I do not deny that it is very important that we should make exact statements. I affirm that Christians ought to have their religious life reduced, as far

as possible, to an intellectual expression. I affirm that intellectual expressions may, as fast as the light is given us, be coördinated and drawn out into a creed, or form of belief. Because creeds have been made instruments of oppression, and because they have been unwarrantably used, it does not follow that they are of no value. There is no man that ever feels, and feels definitely, who does not form a written or an unwritten creed. Every man that thinks has opinions; and if you have opinions on any subject, and they take on any order, that is a creed. Every man has a creed about his business. The way he thinks his business ought to be conducted is his commercial creed. If he teaches his son how to do business, he gives him a creed. If a man belongs to a political party he has a political creed. It is called a "platform;" but that is only another name for the same thing. Creeds are intellectual outlines, that are generally used, both in politics and religion, to deceive the mind with. Whatever sphere a man is in—whether he be a navigator, a musician, a painter, or something else—unless he is a mere enthusiast, his feelings, his enthusiasms even, convert themselves more or less facilely into ideas, and those ideas take on some order, and become the outlines of his opinions and beliefs. And these are his creed. Therefore, in every age of the world, the human mind has tended to formulate its intellectual beliefs.

What I object to is, the idea that any creed can really present to the human mind a clear and definite conception of the Lord Jesus Christ. That can be had only by the power of the Holy Spirit, so enlarging and inspiring the faculties of the soul that the soul itself shall by faith apprehend him. Every man must by the inflammation of his own heart-feelings find his Christ.

A creed is just like a philosopher's telescope. He sweeps the heavens to see if he can find the star for which he is searching; and by-and-by the glass brings it to his eye. The glass helps him; but it is not the glass that sees the star. It is the eye that does that. The glass is a mere instrument by which to identify the star, and magnify it, and bring it near, and shut off other things. A blind man could not see a heavenly body with a telescope, no matter how powerful it might be. A creed is a philosopher's telescope by which we identify philosophical truths, and magnify them, and bring them near; but it is the heart that is to apprehend them. It is the heart that is to interpret the things that are marked out by our creed or philosophy.

There is a great deal more importance in this than perhaps many are disposed to believe. It is this indiscriminate use of creeds that perplexes and confounds the mind of the community in times of controversy; in times such as existed a few hundred years ago in England; in times such as exist now in some parts of Europe. For instance,

where a man's life depended on his creed, Christians were warriors, and had business on hand. It is only two or three generations back, measuring by long-lived men's ages, when to deny the presence of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sacrament was enough to destroy the strongest man, in England. Murder is not so fatal a crime in New York to-day (for it is not fatal at all to the murderer) as in Oxford or Cambridge, two hundred years ago, was the crime of those who believed in the Lord's Supper as you and I believe in it. It was a crime for which nothing less than fire and the ax were penalties. And at such a time a creed had a value in it. It was a weapon of offence and defence, both, which long since has ceased to be needed as such a weapon. Now we are clinging to a creed largely as a means of instruction. Used with moderation, it is of very great importance to instruct by. But if you suppose that you can ever do more with it than make it an auxiliary to faith, you are mistaken. You never can do more with it than to bring the heart into conjunction with an intellectual presence, and then you must resort to the help of the Holy Ghost. There is no further help to be given your soul. It must fight its own way with these helps up into the bosom of Christ, and learn what he is, and who he is, and what are the blessed sensations of love toward him. More than a creed is necessary.

3. The heart may embrace Christ with an enthusiasm of love, though the intellectual perception is imperfect and vague. It is better that the intellectual perception should be full and clear; nevertheless, a man can embrace Christ by the heart without the help of the understanding, far better than he can embrace Christ by the understanding without the aid of the heart. Thousands and thousands there have been, I believe, who have loved Christ, and have lived on their love to him, and have died by the power of that love, and have been translated to glory, though they could not have defined the divine nature, nor reduced their faith to any intellectual expression. There have been multitudes of children, poor uneducated persons, degraded negro minds, into whose teaching never entered even the technics of philosophy, who understood nothing of mental science, but whose hearts have seen Jesus Christ, and out of whose hearts has gone an enthusiasm, an allegiance, a fidelity, that has led them gloriously through life and through death to the blessed Master. They would have been larger and happier Christians, doubtless, if they had added to the heart element the intellectual element also; but it is possible for one to take hold of Christ with the heart. It is possible for one who has but slender endowments of reason to take hold of Christ.

And that is the peculiarity of Christianity. It is not a lore of philosophy which requires years and years of teaching, and which can

be taught only to men of genius. It does not require that a man should understand the whole theory of moral government, or that he should understand the psychology of the divine mind, before he can go to God through Christ Jesus. A child can go. A peasant can go. A blind-minded, ignorant man can go. The lowest and poorest can get hold of their God, though they cannot reason, and though they have but very little understanding. It is this peculiarity that makes the gospel of Christ a gospel for the poor; and that makes it a gospel for all ages, for all nations, and for all climes.

When, therefore, you insist upon it that a man shall accept Jesus Christ through the channels of a large understanding, you commit a serious error. If intellectual instruction becomes a part of your domestic training, it is all the better; but if meeting men as they are, untaught, unwashed, uncultured, uninspired, you find one saying, "I love the Lord Jesus Christ," and he lives as though he loved him, it is not right for you to demand the other element; it is not right that he should be required to have exact, clearly-defined beliefs; it is not right that he should be called upon to give all the philosophical reasons why Jesus Christ stands central in the universe, or why the life and sufferings and death of Christ are atoning in their power. For I hold that if one loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and accepts him as his Saviour, that is the essential thing. Although it would be better for him if he could add the other element, he can get along without it. He can live safely without it, and he can die safely without it. You cannot take a mere intellectual belief in Christ and be saved by it; but if Christ is presented to the heart by faith you can live and die and be saved by that. Though you are better off with the intellectual element, yet if it is not there you may be saved, provided Christ dwells in your heart by faith.

In the day of Christ, some men took him by the senses, and some rejected him. Now-a-days some men take Christ by intellectual apprehension. If it is vitalized by another and more important feeling, it is admirable. Without being thus vitalized, it is of very little use. It is a light that will condemn one by and by. But no man takes the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and love,—in other words, no man takes him by an experimental knowledge, no man takes him by a personal enthusiasm of allegiance,—that he does not take him substantially right, and in satisfying forms.

Christ is not divine to us, then, by a well-formed idea of divinity. It is the worship of love that makes him divine. There is many a woman who loves a man as if he were divine. Although she does not intellectually think he is divine, she feels as though he was. That is to say, she looks up to him. For women love up if they can, and never down if they can help it. There is many a man that stood heroic before the wife; and up to him went enthusiasm, and affection, and every-

thing that was in her heart to give. If he had been very God she could not have given more. He was her idol. He was to her a God. If you had called upon her to define her feeling, she would not have been able to do it. If you had asked her if she thought he was divine, she would have said "No." Intellectually she did not think he was divine; but her heart made him divine: she wrongfully made him her idol.

There are many and many hearts that turn toward the Lord Jesus Christ with an enthusiasm of love, with a clasping of affection, with an entire allegiance, with a hope, a yearning, a desire, that carries with it everything which their heart has to give; and they have been so educated that if you say to them, "Do you think he is divine?" they cannot say that they believe him to be so; but their heart is making him divine all the time: and the loving worship of Jesus as divine, is a true worship. By the heart, man believes unto salvation; and there is many and many a man who may err in his speculative ideas, but whose heart makes correction for all his mistakes, if it is really and truly, with all its power and enthusiasm, fixed on the Saviour, and loves him.

Whoever so loves, then, need not be afraid to translate his love into words. As a man may love Christ in his heart as if he were God, although in terms he denies that he is God, his intellect being weak, and in bondage, but his heart being free, and interpreting more nobly than his understanding, and transcending it, taking the place of it, indeed; so I say to such persons, who are restrained, oftentimes, from avowing that they worship Christ as God, You need not be afraid to bear witness, if you can, that Christ is all that God could be to you in your conception. If instead of Christ you should put Jehovah there, would you feel any more love? No. Would you feel any more singleness of purpose to serve him? No. Would you be any more zealous in serving him? No. Could you trust him more utterly than you trust Christ? No. Are not all your best feelings consciously excited in you by the thought of Christ, by the presence of Christ, and by the truth as it is in Christ? Yes. And although you see manifold inconsistencies and imperfections in yourself, and live far below your ideal, are you not conscious that about that name your best experiences, the very best things your soul knows, cluster every day? Yes. Then you need not be afraid to put the name on that Being. You need not be afraid to crown him. Your heart has crowned him already. You have made him your Chief, your Leader, your Guide. You have ascribed to him, not by thought but by affection, everything that constitutes allegiance to divinity. Your heart is worshipping him.

What is worship? It is not merely bowing down and saying prayers. It is not merely the ascription of this, that or the other qual-

ity which may come in. But he who pours forth his heart, his best feelings, and gives himself to another in all his nobler nature, worships. And I think there are thousands of persons that the stress of controversy has driven away from the *name* of Christ, whom the grace of God has brought back to the *substance*. I believe that there are thousands of persons who feel the drawing of Christ's great heart, that is drawing men as unconsciously to them as the planets in the heavens draw the tides. The ocean does not know what ails it; but it swings to and fro, following the planets, going out and coming in, obeying the direction of the power that is exerted upon them from above. And thousands of hearts in every community, conscious of their sinfulness, and conscious of their need, look aloft, and behold the one name of Christ Jesus; and to him they give their thought, and their zeal, and their soul. They live in him, and trust in him. His name is the sweetest name in dying. It is music in the sinner's ear. And why not call Him divine?

Do you think that God the Father, who so loved the world, while yet it was his enemy, as to give his only begotten Son to die for it, is so narrow and jealous that, when you are with all your heart loving and following Jesus, if you make a mistake in a name or philosophy, he will be angry at it? If you are giving your soul to Christ you are doing the best you can; and the mistake of a name or a philosophy is not going to be material with you. Oh, that they who think they will be saved because they intellectually *believe* in the divinity of Christ, could be alarmed and aroused! That will not save them. Oh, that those who have all the glow of love in their souls, and who yet think, "I do not dare to call my Saviour divine," could be undeceived, and break away from these shackles, and these traditional prejudices, and come out into the light and liberty of the sons of God! He who loves God under any name, and follows him, and yields allegiance, and *enthusiastic* allegiance, to him, is salvable. For it is the love of God that redeems us, and cleanses us, and leads us with an infallible light.

Take these simple forms of words:

"Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches." "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Take these simple declarations, and translate them into your life. Ask not yourself what it is going to do to you, or where it is going to carry you. Simply *do it.*

Do you suppose it is possible for you to love Christ in such an intimate way as that; do you suppose it is possible for you to be identified with him as a branch is to a vine; do you suppose it is possible for you to live so that you can say of him, "He is my Alpha and

Omega, he is my first and my last, he is my food and my drink," and do it all your life long,—and then have anything left over and above that, which the soul can do for any other being higher than he? Have you not spent the force of life when you have fulfilled these commands that lie upon the face of Scripture?

Let me put it in another form. Suppose a man, of every excellence, noble in form and feature, and endowed with every generous disposition and worthy aspiration, should meet with one cast down; suppose that through the stress of temptation, through the wail of woe that is in the world, some soul had been thralled and soiled, but yet, being brought out by him into the companionship of holy thoughts, had begun to seek a better way; suppose this noble nature drawing near to her, should instruct her from day to day, until all her soul began to rise up to a higher plane, until she began to see how hateful her past life was; suppose that now he should say to her, "Come to me every day, that where I am you may be also;" suppose he should say to her, "Come freely, for my thoughts live in you;" suppose he say to her, "I want you, after this, to consider your life as so twined with mine, that we are growing on one root, and that you are a branch of me;" suppose, still holding her fluttering soul, she in her silence wondering what such words could mean, but intensely excited and lifted up, and coming to a nobler and nobler apprehension of truth and fidelity and purity, he should say to her, "Now think of me always; think of me when the morning breaks—let me be the bright and morning star to you; think of me in the twilight—let me be also the evening star to you; think of me in all times of joy and sorrow. I will never leave you nor forsake you. You are mine, and mine forever." Suppose this should go on for weeks and months, until her whole soul had gone out and twined itself with his being; and suppose, at last, when she had given everything she had to give, he should turn upon her, and say, "What! do you suppose it is right for you to love and worship me in this way? You must look higher than to me. You must not have such a clasping adoration as this for me. I must go. I must leave you. I cannot have you. You must find some other support. You must put your trust in something higher than I am."—I ask you if that would not be using the divinest elements in the human soul for the worst betrayal which it is possible for one being to commit upon another?

If, when I rise in the last day, and look upon Jesus Christ, I may not cast my crown at his feet, then let me die in ignorance of his name. For he has told me that he is mine, and that I am his. He has said that he dwells in my heart, and has told me to come into his heart. He has called himself by every sweet name. Nature itself is precious to me because I associate it in so many ways with him. There is no

thing in the day or in the night or in the year, that has not been sanctified and made use of as a love-term for the Lord Jesus Christ. And now may I not love him, so that by love I shall hold on through life, and go through the ford of death? And when I rise on the other side, am I to be rebuked because it is idolatry? Who taught me to worship him? What if he did not use the word *worship;* did he not tell me to love him? Did he not tell me to cling to him? Did he not tell me to aspire toward him? Did he not open to me everything in him that was sweet and attractive? And had I not a right to let my heart go out to him in simplicity and trust? And am I to be cast out in the last day because I worshipped the wrong one?

Oh, poor bewildered soul! do not be afraid. There is no such rock in the harbor where you are going. Love on, love more; and do not fear that in the last day you will find that you have put the crown on the wrong head. Crown the Lord Jesus Christ—*crown him Lord of all*—and you are safe in worshipping him. Love him, and he will take care of you. Dismiss your jealousies. Dismiss your fears, and your distress. Only be sorry that you do not love enough, and that your life does not conform enough to love.

God grant that every one of us may stand to repeat these words:

"They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, for all thy care of love which thou hast taught us. We thank thee that thou hast caused the teachings of experience to converge upon thee. And whatever we have learned to know of the heart in all its relations of home; whatever we have seen of love between children and parents, and friends most loving, is but the faint and far away instruction of thy providence. When thou bringest by the Holy Spirit the knowledge of Jesus Christ to us, then thou dost enkindle all these knowledges; then thou dost lift up our souls into a higher sphere of experience. And now we know what is the full meaning of all this alphabetic experience. We are taught to love thee with all the heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and to rejoice in it, and to find in it our perfect liberty; to find in it the hidden experience of power; to find in it all joy and perfect peace.

We thank thee that thou art granting unto some the more perfect knowledge of this royal way of life. We thank thee that there are some who have found the King's palace, though they only walk before it, and do not see his royal presence. Some there are that sit in the garden and have glimpses as he passes to and fro within. And some there are that stand upon the threshold and behold his comely presence, and yet do not go in. And some there are that stand within, and yet as servants. And some there are that are admitted to his presence, and that hear him say, Henceforth I call you not servants but friends. And some there are that abide with him; and he knoweth them. Thrice blessed are they. Oh that we were of their number! Oh that we were within, and always within, and always hearing thee, and seeing thee, and loving thee, and rejoicing in thee, and rejoiced over. For what can hurt those who are so surrounded by thine arms? What can pierce them or reach to disturb their settled peace? All the earth might weep; but they are lifted in thy divine strength above sorrow. Yea, in sorrow is sweetness to them. They learn to suffer with rejoicings. How precious are the revelations of thyself to those who have the secret of God! How are their lives as choral music! How often is mourning turned to the sweet melody of minor music? Lord, art thou accessible unto all? May others come? Wilt thou show thy face to those who walk past the palace, and are without? Wilt thou not go forth and speak unto the people, and to them that throng the streets? Thou that didst teach in the temple, didst teach upon the hillside. Thou that didst teach in Jerusalem, didst also teach in Samaria, despised as it was. Thou that didst reason with the priests, and offer the Pharisees salvation, didst suffer the publicans and harlots to come unto thee; and thou wert most merciful and gracious unto them, and some of them found that peace which passeth all understanding. And art thou not the same yesterday, to-day and forever, dwelling in an innocuous flame of love—flame of love that never burns but purifies? Art thou not shining forth as the sun, thy symbol, is, for all—for the poorest; for the most needy; for all that need and will take?

Grant, we beseech of thee, this day thy sovereign love to all those that, by ignorance, by bondage, or by bias and hindrance, are kept from their best estate. Thou must draw them. Draw them, we beseech of thee, not by compulsion, and by strange hands, and violent forces: draw them as the sun draws forth the flowers in the garden, that come out they know not why. Draw them by thy love, that they may find that secret way between their souls and God, which, once open, shall never be stopped again.

Oh teach every one that is weary to find the place of rest. Teach all those that are oppressed with guilt to know where their clearance is. Teach all those that are in despondency and in the borders of despair to look up and realize that a great light has risen upon them. Teach all those that are made to know their folly, and to feel their weakness, and to despise themselves at times, and at other times to cast themselves recklessly away as if all strife were vain for them, to find where their succor is. May they behold Jesus bearing the lambs in his bosom – the Shepherd that guides by hand, by voice, by rod, and carries as well. And we pray that there may be none that shall count themselves unworthy of thee, of thy notice, of thy care. For thou, O Physician!

wilt not despise any. Thou wilt undertake for the most sick, and those that are nearest unto death, and thou wilt recover them, and bring them back to love again.

Grant we pray thee, then, that those who lie about the pool waiting and looking wistfully for some one to help them down, may hear thy voice saying to them, Wilt thou be made whole? And grant that there may be many souls to-day that shall lift themselves up in a holy expectation, and come forth in a blessed exaltation, saying to those around about them, See what the Lord hath done for me. Grant that hard hearts may be broken, and obdurate hearts turned back. Grant that there may be relentings of will, new purposes, and holier ones, more fervent prayers, and more sincere vows than have been made before. And oh! that those who have often thronged thy sanctuary, and have registered vows there, which are forgotten; oh! that those who look back upon many and many promises made in times of darkness and trouble, which have never been kept; oh! that those who look back upon times of sickness when death came near to take them, upon promises made to God, everyone of which has been broken—oh! that they might look back to-day and think upon all these things, and renew these promises, and fulfill them speedily, with sorrow and contrition, with confession of sin and humiliation. O that there might be found many to cast themselves upon the sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus to-day. And may thy Spirit illumine and sanctify and cleanse, and fill with all joy and peace. And may thy name, thus praised in the heavens above, be praised on earth responsively. And may many join that song who shall never cease to sing its numbers with ever-growing strains until they sing that nobler song in heaven.

Bless, not us alone, but all the churches that wait upon thee to-day. Grant that thy people upon earth may cease to divide the garment of Christ. Grant that that which is of Christ in us may be more unspeakably precious than all the rest of the things in this world. Grant that we may be delivered from arrogance and from selfishness. Grant that we may be as tender toward one another as thou art toward us. Forgiven every day, living on thy mercy, may we learn at last to keep our hands from our brother's throat. And we pray that thou wilt cause everywhere that spirit of tenderness and sympathy and gentleness and divine love to glow, that it may overcome, as a mighty divine power, pride and arrogance, and every evil and hateful thing. Grant that holiness may prevail in the world, and all flesh see thy salvation.

Which we ask through Jesus the beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, Almighty God, thy blessing to rest upon the truth which we have spoken. Grant that it may be as a word from God. And with divine illumination and divine inspiration, lift us up from our low estate. Lift us up from the poor teachings of the household. Give us the clearer light of thine own Spirit, and bring us into that personal communion with Jesus by which our heart shall be changed to love and our life illumined by faith. Thee and thee only do we trust. In thy name will we live; and in thy name will we die; and if need be we will perish in thy name. For thou art to us all in all. O blessed and atoning Saviour! we thank thee for thyself. We thank thee for that goodness which has brought us into personal love to thee. We thank thee for all the cheer and comfort which we have in it. We thank thee that it makes our bed in sickness; that it smooths our road in adversity; that it charms and cheers us in the dreariest scenes of life. We thank thee that we are enlarged and ennobled by that which thou dost give to us of thyself. Still may we cling to thee. Still may we love thee; and loving live, and loving die, that we may live again in an immortality of love. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

"But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."—2. Cor. IV. 3, 4.

Sight belongs, in the first instance, to the bodily organization; and yet, very early, and among all nations, the phraseology is transferred to the operations of the mind, instead of the eye; and men are said to see, or not to see, mentally. A corresponding change was also made in the medium of sight. The truth was called *light*, and falsity was called *darkness*. The whole imagery of the eye, and the whole process of perception, has been spiritualized. It scarcely seems to have been transferred. We have become so used to it, that it is no longer a figure in any sense. We speak with the same familiarity of a man's seeing a thought or an argument, as we do of his seeing a mountain or a bird. And we speak of truth so familiarly as *the light* that no man stops to think whether I say, "The *light* of this matter;" or, "The *truth* of this matter." Either phrase, even by a child, would be perfectly well understood.

The apostle here declares that the Gospel is hidden; and the implication is, that it is a thing hidden, as it were, in the night—that there is darkness spread over it; and that it is hidden from men on account of their moral character—on account of their nature. They are blind. He says, "It is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." The truth of the Gospel has so admirable an adaptation to our moral wants, that we should receive it almost spontaneously, it is so admirably fitted to meet a necessity of our being that it would have an irresistible impression upon our moral nature, if it were not that there is something which hinders it. There is some interposition. It is declared here, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." There is darkness thrown between the appearances of the truth in the Gospel of Christ and the receiving faculties of the human soul, "lest

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the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

That which the apostles found to be true has been found to be true in every age since, by any that have attempted to teach significantly, and with effect, the pure truths of the Gospel of Christ.

How it is that men are blinded, or what is meant by being blind to truth, may need some illustration.

The impression that a man's reason is a pure intelligence, that it is a simple capacity to know, and that it acts by laws purely of its own, is, I suppose, the popular conception. Men discriminate between the reason and the emotions; and we are accustomed to hear persons speak of the necessity, in order to let the reason have full operation, of suppressing the feelings. We are to discharge, we are told, passion, and prejudice, and feeling of every kind, from the mind, and to look calmly, with a pure, cold reason—for men have an impression that reason is just that. In regard to far the most important sphere of knowledge, however, the truth is, that reason is not competent to discern the truth at all, in and of itself, and is as absolutely dependent upon the influence of feeling for its capacity to discern moral and social truth, as the eye is dependent upon light for its power to discern color, or measure distances. There is no popular fallacy, and no philosophical fallacy, of the schools, more apparent upon reflection and examination than the idea that in order to think well, a man must think coldly. It is to a very great extent true of the lowest sphere of truth—that is, the sphere of physical truth. In pure scientific truth, it may be that the reason is to be discharged of all color, and that no man is to let emotion, passion, prejudice, perception, or anything of the kind, come in to determine, or to modify, or even to influence, the use of his reason. It is the pure action of the intellect upon qualities that lie outside of the man's own consciousness, however, only, in which the reason is capable of discerning in and of its own self. The moment you come from mere physical truths into the realm of human life, and undertake to investigate and determine truths that involve in them character, affection, sentiment; in other words, the moment you begin to speak about the truths of common life—about prudence, justice, kindness, pity, love, hate, fear, or desires of any kind, right or wrong, in all their categories—that moment, I affirm, the understanding ceases to be competent to form any conception, and to come to any just judgment, without the help of the feelings. The intellect cannot discern a truth of justice unless there is a conscience that throws upon it its magnetism, or its color, or whatever you choose to call it. It is impossible for the intellect to form a judgment of a truth of conscience unless it looks upon it in the light of conscience. There can be no purely intellectual judgment of honor.

There must be a sentiment behind the truths of honor, and then the intellect can judge of those truths.

So it is of all the relations of life. The most important truths are those which stand between you and your neighbor—between you and the whole tribe and family of mankind. In social and moral truths lie the life of man; and here are the most important elements of reason. These have constituted immeasurably the most of all that the reason has had to deal with in the history of the human race. And in regard to this large class of truths, pure intellection is foolishness. It is a light shining in the darkness; and the darkness comprehends it not. In regard to all these truths there can be no such thing as an intelligent judgment formed, unless the reason is supplemented and inspired, and to a certain extent guided, by the intuitions of feeling. And these, together, constitute the ability of a man to form just judgments in regard to social and moral truths.

Experience shows that the intellect of man ranges from a very quick sensibility to truths, moral and social, all the way down to stone-blindness. If you take men as they rise in society, you shall find that many —and I think the number increases—are competent to discern truths upon their presentation. They are quick; they are sensitive. You can present to them no truth of justice, none of honor, none of rectitude, none of character, that they do not comprehend instinctively. Their minds are so adjusted, their intellect has been so accustomed to play with their moral feelings, their understanding is so saturated with moral sentiments, that the moment their attention is called to these truths, they are like truisms to them.

From that higher point men grade. You will find some that are competent to judge of certain kinds of truth, and insensitive to all other kinds. You will find other men that are competent to judge of some kinds of truth by an effort, when they strive to come up to them, in their more favored hours, when all their better affections have been roused up, and their worst ones have been put in subjection, but only under such circumstances. In a time of calamity, of affliction, of one or another experience, you will find that men are able to discern moral truths; but not truths that are below these. You will find men who can discern the strongest colors of moral and social truths, but very little besides. Then you will find other men that do not understand these truths at all. It is like casting pearls before swine to tell them about social truths and moral truths. They not only do not understand them, but they do not believe in them. And they turn again and rend you if you preach them.

This describes the condition of men in human society as they actually are on the presentation to them of pure forms of religious truth,

and of the higher forms of social truth. Not only do we see this to be so upon the bare statement, but we act upon it. Men see differently all the time, and we act accordingly.

For instance, a man is solicited to buy some pictures. He has never thought much of pictures himself. He has known that he was getting rich, and has meant by-and-by to live as other folks did; and he has understood that folks that lived well lived with pictures in their houses; and he has expected that the time would come when he should live with pictures in his house. He has learned that having pictures is a part of gentility, and has made up his mind that he will have pictures.

At last the time has come when he has a little more money than he wants in his business, or knows what to do with; and his wife says, "Now buy some pictures;" and his daughters say, "Why don't you, Pa?" and he concludes that he will. A speculator, finding out that he is going to buy pictures, catches him by the elbow, and draws him into a place where there are pictures for sale, and says, "You ought to have these pictures. Look at this one. It is one of the most glorious pictures anywhere to be found. Don't you see?" The man, after looking a moment, says, "I do not exactly like the frame." "Well, but the *picture*," says the speculator—"do you see that?" "The picture may be well enough; but I do not know much about these things. I must get the advice of somebody that knows about pictures."

Here is a class of truths that this man confesses he does not know much about. He looks, and does not see what he looks at. He does not know what to look for. He does not know whether the colors are right or wrong. He does not know whether the forms are according to nature, or a violation of nature. He knows nothing about grouping, or about drapery. He knows nothing about "tone." He looks upon the picture as a mere swab of color all about the canvas. Here is a case in which he is incapable of judging for himself, and he knows it.

Who does he get to judge for him? There is a spider bellied man yonder, in a little hole, whom he has employed whenever he has been "shaving" notes or speculating in paper. His judgment is good in money matters. He is keen as he can be in this direction. His eye glitters like a basilisk's. He is sharp as a razor. He scarcely ever makes a mistake in giving his opinion with regard to financial operations. And the man says to himself, "I think I will go and ask him about pictures." And then, after a moment's thought, he laughs, and says, "What does that old miser know about pictures? He is not the man for me to go to. I must find somebody else." And here is another instance in which a man that is familiar with one kind of truth, does not know much about another.

By-and-by the man thinks of another person, and he says to a friend, "Who is that fellow that failed two or three times—the son of a rich man, who traveled in Europe, and spent a great deal of money on his education, and only succeeded in one thing—making a popinjay of himself? I recollect hearing it said that he had a great taste for pictures." The man hunts up this "fellow," as he calls him, saying to himself, "He has an eye to see what I cannot, and what this old money-maker cannot." They are blind in art, but have good sight in finance; and he has good sight in art, but is blind in finance. They have succeeded on the street, and he has failed on the street.

The man, when he has found this *connoisseur*, says to him, "Go with me and look at some pictures, and give me your judgment about them." So they go to see the pictures that the speculator gave such a glowing account of; and after glancing about the room, the critic says, "Are you going to buy these pictures?" "Well, I do not know. The man recommends them very highly. He says that is a Rembrandt, and wants me to buy it." "A what? A Rembrandt! What does he say that other is?" "That he says is a Rubens." "A Rubens! Look here, my friend, just you come out of this place. Do not you get caught by being persuaded to buy any of these pictures. A man with half an eye can see that they are mere daubs. They are only copies, and miserable copies at that. I would not give twenty shillings for the whole of them."

One of these men is stone blind about pictures; but the other sees them. And men, the moment they want anything done in a direction in which they cannot see, go for advice and help to men who can see in that direction, though they may not be able to see in other directions.

I have not unfrequently been consulted by persons at a distance, as to what they had better do with property. One man writes me that he wants to bestow about two hundred thousand dollars in the establishment of eleëmosynary institutions, and that he would like some suggestions as to the best methods of doing it. Suppose, in such a case, I should go to some avaricious hunks, and say to him, "You are a moneyed man, and I want to ask your opinion in a matter involving a large sum. I have a friend in Indiana who wants to invest——" "I would advise him to put it in stocks of the Michigan Central, Rock Island, or something of that sort," says the man. "No," I say, "he wants to invest it in charitable——" "Charitable? What stock is that? I never heard it quoted on the street. I do not believe it was ever known here?" "But stop, my friend; he wants me to give him some information as to how to leave his property so that it will do good after he is dead." "Oh! advise him to leave it to his wife and

children. That is what I mean to do with my property." "He has no wife and no children, sir; and he wants to leave it so that it will take care of the poor and needy." "Well—well—I never thought much about those things. You had better go to a minister or somebody else. I do not understand matters of that kind. I cannot give you any advice on such subjects."

That man has no eye-sight for things of this sort. He does not understand anything about a charitable application of funds. He never thought about it, or felt about it, or cared about it. He does not like to have his attention called to it. When he has been pressed to use some of his superabundant means for benevolent purposes, all that was in him rose up against it, and he pushed it away from him, and would not have anything to do with it.

Take a merry, sharp, good natured, well-to-do, but selfish and unscrupulous lawyer. Go to him in respect to your child. Say to him, "We are living neighbors, and I desire to consult you on a subject which causes me a great deal of unhappiness, and to have you tell me what I am to do. I brought my daughter up meaning her to be, as she is, a splendid creature. She is perfect in music, drawing, and everything that could add to her accomplishments. I have brought her to just the point when I want her to go into society, and she has gone in company only a single winter, and has twenty beaus after her; and now she has fallen in with some of those church folks and got religion. She does not want to dance, or go to balls any more. The education I have given her is thrown away. All that she cares for is to mope with her Bible, and run after rag-tag and bob-tail children. I have talked with her, and coaxed her, and scolded her, but it does no good. She is the plague of my life. She is a dear girl; I cannot help loving her; and I am going to leave her all my property; but I do wish this thing had not happend. And I do not know what to do. I want you to advise me."

The lawyer looks at him, and says, "Then Mary has gone and got religion, has she? Now, I tell you what it is, neighbor, my advice is that you go to the minister, and talk to him. I do not think I am very deep in such things myself. If it were a matter of dispute between you and some neighbor, I would gladly take the case; but as it is a question of religious feeling (whatever that may be) between you and your daughter, I confess I do not know much about it. We do not have much of that sort of thing in courts. You must go to somebody that has more knowledge of such matters."

Would not that be true to nature? Is it not true that many men are blind respecting that class of subjects? You yourself are every single day sorting out men on the principle that some men can see

some things, and cannot see others; that some men know some things, and do not know others. And when you speak of what a man knows you do not speak of ideas necessarily. Men may know a great deal of mathematics, a great deal of machinery, a great deal of invention, and yet not know that which shall fit them to be your counsellors. There are some things about which, if you question them, you will find that they are all blank. If it were a matter of any delicacy, you would not think of going to them. If it were a matter of courage and strength, you would not think of going to some others. You sort men on the supposition that they are differently developed, and that some can see and some cannot; that some can see some things, and not others; that some can see a little way up, some further up, and some far up. Men recognize this in their daily business; but they do not stop to see that it is part of a great moral problem; that it is a truth exemplified in secular and social life which underlies the whole teaching of the Bible, and has in it the most tremendous issues and consequences.

If we take this average experience of men, or if we take this secular recognition of the fact that men are or may be blind to truths, we perceive how they grow in this direction. They are not so at the beginning, always. It is one of the most melancholy things in the world, that while, usually, the executive part of a man grows sharper and more effective as he advances in life, those things which make his manhood, his noble traits, average worse as he grows older. The effect of the sorrows of the world, of its strifes, its disappointments, its rivalries and collisions; the growth of pride and avarice—these are such that, without the Gospel to hold them back, and sweeten their dispositions, persons ripen poorly, badly, and are seldom as generous, seldom as honorable, seldom as sensitive, seldom as fine in their perceptions, as they were when they were boys and girls. In their executive nature, their force-nature, men gain, and in their higher moral nature I fear they lose, as they advance in life. Let us look at the steps by which they lose.

Men grow blind to moral truth simply by pre-occupation; by having their minds so full of other things, that there is nothing in them that looks or sees. A man goes down through the street so full of thoughts of business that he does not know one man that he meets. A man goes through a long ride, and he is so occupied with his companion, or with his own thoughts, that when he comes back he could not tell you anything about the scenery. He could not tell you whether he has seen any trees, or any birds, or anything else. The trees flitted right before him; the birds sung from the thicket which he was skirting; the flowers exhaled the sweetest perfumes; the farmers were

in the fields plowing, and the crows and blackbirds were following for grubs; and the opening scenes around about him were enough to make a poet half crazy; but he went through the circuit of a seven or eight miles' ride; and when he returns, and the invalid girl says to him, "Father; is the grass growing?" he says, "What my child?" "Is the grass growing?" "I do not recollect. I did not think to look." "Well, did you not see any birds while you were out?" Poor thing! there she has lain on the bed for months; her strength is gone, her hands are thin, and white as alabaster; she longs for the country, and says, "Oh! if I could only see the flowers again, and hear the birds sing once more! Father, *were* the birds singing?" "Why, my child, if I had thought you wanted to know, I certainly would have listened." She cannot get anything out of him. His mind was so full of something else, that, though he went through a most beautiful region, where there were countless objects and sounds to delight the eye and the ear, when he gets back home he cannot tell a thing that he has seen or heard, but says, "I have been looking inside all the while."

Suppose that, on one of those paroxysmal days in the Gold Room in New York, while every one of the men there is attempting—with admirable success—to imitate the wildest lunatic, throwing up his hands, and yelling and pitching and striving—suppose that on such a day, a bunch of flowers, the most exquisite, were carried in there and set down, do you suppose they would be noticed? Not a man would see them. Why, those men would be so eaten up by the insane excitement of the hour that they would not see anything, and would hardly hear a thunderbolt if it should break in the midst of them!

Men can be so preöccupied that their minds become quite insusceptible to impressions. This may occur not simply in physical things, but also in social and moral things. A man can take one or two interests in life, and give himself up to them with such absorption, that all the greater truths of life are unheeded by him. Of the spiritual influences that are permeating society; of that which God is doing by his providence; of that which he is doing by the ministry of angels; of what the Holy Ghost is doing in the hearts of men—of these things that are going on from day to day, around about him, he never has a suspicion. He does not see them; he does not believe in them; he does not understand them when he hears others talking about them, his mind is so perfectly filled with secular affairs.

People often say of such a man, "He is a good sort of person. I never heard that he did any harm." Did you ever hear that he did any good? He is entirely absorbed in one or two secular things. His whole life beats in those one or two things.

The process of blindness to spiritual things may grow in a man, too,

by the principle of elective affinity. Men feed on that which they hunger for, morally, and socially, and intellectually. They seek the qualities in life which they desire. When, therefore, one class of men go down the street for business, they see only the side of life which pertains to business. When another class go down the street for gayety, they see only the sides of life that reflect gayety. One class of men, going down the street, think only of men; for they are managers of men. Another class think of customers; their business is to gather and to keep customers. Another class think of companions; they are seekers and lovers of pleasure more than anything else. That which is strong in men absorbs their attention. The strongest passion or feeling in them controls. And by this principle of elective affinity they seek out that in life which they most desire.

That is the principle on which men read the Bible. If a man is intensely conscientious, he reads the Bible so as to gather out all the conscience element there is in it. The love element will not touch him. He will go over that and not see any of it. To him the Bible will seem to be one long series of conscience-propositions. Another man, who has very little conscience, but who has a great deal of veneration; a man in whom the worshipping instinct is strong, will go through the Bible and glean out all that appeals to that predominant quality of his nature. Another man, whose predominant feeling is love, as he goes through the Bible, will see no conscience, and no veneration, but will be struck with the love principle, and will glean that all out.

And men do just so by life. They glean out of it the things to which they are attracted by elective affinity. Those are the things which they see; and to everything else they are indifferent and blind.

Men become blind to the truth, also, by nourishing passions which are antagonistic to it. Every one knows by his own experience that there are some states of mind which preclude others. If a man is angry, he cannot be mirthful, or if he is mirthful he cannot be angry at the same time. The mind is apparently made with antagonistic passions; and if one is in ascendency, its opposite is in depression, always. And that is the secret of discipline, if people only knew it. When your child is furiously angry, and you wish, without chastisement, to make him good-natured, if you can present that which is ludicrous to him so as to make him laugh, you will see the point at which the anger strives and bubbles and foams, and the point at which, finally the laugh gets the upper-hand, and the anger goes down. This is a trick of the nursery. Children play it on each other. And this principle is important—namely, that the feelings move at opposite poles, and that if one is in ascendency, the other will be in depression. You cannot have destructiveness and benevolence dominant at the

same time. One puts the other down, or is put down by it. And so it is in the whole realm of the human mind.

Now, no man can be saturated with pride, and have any discernment of those spiritual truths which turn on humility. No man can be filled with sensuous passions from day to day, and yet know anything about the truths of disinterestedness, and pure, true, spiritual friendship. No man can live from day to day in the spirit of self-indulgence, and yet have any conception of what Christ meant when he said, "Take up my cross, and follow me, daily." No man can live in a grasping selfishness, and yet have any conception of affluent benevolence. Where men live in the indulgence of the lower passions of their nature, it is impossible for them to see any truths except those which are colored by those passions. I had almost said that they are a mechanical obstruction. Certain it is that no mechanical obstruction could be more effectual than this moral obstruction. In the very nature of things, where lower passions fill the mind, men are blind to higher moral elements.

By habit this may become a second nature—and it actually does. Men grow away from the power of seeing things. Men grow away from art. Men's eyes grow less sensitive and less delicate. They come to know less and less about proportion; less and less about those elements which are constituents of art. And so, men grow away from household purity. They are not so good boys as they were little children. They are not so good young men as they were boys. They are not so good in middle life as they were when they were young men. They are in old age worse than they were in middle life. That is the history of hundreds and thousands. And men grow away from moral feeling. It never, perhaps, was very strong; but it grows less and less declared—less and less effectual. What by pre-supposition, what by elective affinity for other things, and what by the antagonistic influence of the basilar passions, they come to have less sensibility to moral truth. They begin to call it an *ism*, an *abstraction*, or *metaphysics*, and often deride it, and say, "It is not practical; it does not belong to common life and common sense."

That was the apostle's experience in carrying forth the story of Christ. There is something very touching to my mind when I think what Christ was to the apostle. Is there anything that is so innocent, is there anything that is such a mark of simplicity, as the ingenuous conduct of a young lover? He is twenty-two years old. He has a fine heart, a real noble nature. He has at last fallen upon one of God's angels. He tells you so, with great simplicity. There never was such another—for so the young lover always thinks. She is a perfect being—a thing which every lover finds to be the case at first. He makes me

his confident; and says, "I wish you could know her." I have known plenty of others that were equal to her in every way. But he thinks this is a special case. "Oh, Mr. Beecher! I want you to look at her picture." He takes it out and shows it to me. It is an amiable, pretty face; but I have seen five hundred just like it. I would not, of course, hurt his feelings by telling him so; but it is the fact. He goes on to descant upon her beauty. He says, "Knowing her has made another man of me. It has caused me to live differently. It has cleansed my conscience. It has inspired my industry. It has filled full all the better parts of my life. I am determined to be a noble man. I am going to be worthy of this woman."

Oh! do not tell me that the widow's only son buried, is the saddest sight in life. Do not tell me that the first-born child plucked out of the mother's arms, and laid under the flowers and under the turf, is the saddest sight. To see that young man, before one year is gone by, in an agony of despair, bury his trust and faith; to see his heart, after it has touched its most generous mood, fall, like a star from heaven, into darkness and despondency and unfaith—that is the bitterest thing in this world. To lose faith in love; to lose faith in disinterested friendship; to lose faith in that which you thought stood nearest to God and nearest to you—that is the saddest thing in this world.

Paul seems to me just like such a young man, only he never lost his faith; only he is like those more fortunate ones who, having discovered something that they thought to be perfect, have found it to grow better and better in after years. For there are people who are just like flowers that blossom only once—that blossom early in spring, and carry their leaves wilted and ragged all through the summer; and there are persons who are like the morning glory, that begins to blossom early, and does not forget it till the very frost of winter cuts it down. There is bloom upon bloom, morning after morning, and each one is as fair and as fairy-like as if there had never been another.

Paul went forth feeling that he had found a Lover. The old pharisee; the proud, stiff-necked Jew; the man that was cruel in his conscientiousness: the man who, for the sake of making another man believe right, took him by the throat and hurled him into the fire—he had a view of Jesus Christ that gave him such a conception of God, such an idea of love, such a sense of character, as became to him, oh! what a power! When once he had taken it in it filled his soul with light. And he said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." It was he that could say, afterward, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." It was he that could declare that by faith he rejoiced in infirmities and tribulations. It was he that

could say, "My life is hid with Christ in God." It was he that could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me." Paul went round with this Christ—this lover Christ—this Christ with whom he was in love, who was all to him in heaven, and who was the center and embodiment of every conceivable excellence, in God, in angels, and in men. This Christ he preached. His soul was thrilled by him.

If you read Paul's letters, you will see that, although he was a man of an intensely logical mind, never did the name of Christ come up in the midst of an argument, that it did not shatter that argument to fragments. Never did it burst in upon him, that he did not have to stop and unfold Christ's character, and express his adoration for him, before he could get his own leave to go on with his argument. And there never was a more ragged arguer than his New Testament writings show him to have been. And that is the peculiarity of the Bible. No man knows how to read the Bible who does not understand the exploration of sudden emotions of love in the midst of logic; who does not understand the deflections it makes.

Paul went out to preach this Christ, that made him tingle from head to foot; and men listened; and some said, "What will this babbler say?" and others said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods;" and philosophers listened with a leaden and half-curious ear, and forgot what he had said before they left the spot. To be sure, there was one widow out by the river who heard it gladly; and here and there a poor servant or slave accepted it; but after years and years of labor he said, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." And yet, there was living in his imagination, and glowing in his heart, a radiant and transcendent image of beauty—the most glorious conception that could fire the heart of man, exalting it, elevating it, comforting it, and promising it joy in the life that now is and in that which is to come. And when he preached it in Athens, he got nothing; when he preached it in Corinth he got a handful; when he preached it in Asia Minor, he gleaned a few here, and a few there; but the great mass of men were clamoring on. The god of this world had blinded them so that they could not see the truth, and the beauty, and the joy, and the glory, which there was in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, that which was the experience of Paul, is the experience of every man whose own soul has ever been made enthusiastic by the love of the Saviour. When he attempts to preach Christ to men, the conviction which he looks for in them does not exist. The sentiments which he expresses find no echo in their bosom. The rapture and zeal which he feels, meet with no response from them. They are preoccupied. And it is this fact that makes them blind to these things. They are engrossed with other things which they like better, and that makes them blind. They are under the dominion of those coarser passions which are antagonistic to any such feelings as these. And thus, from every side, and for every reason, men are blind, so that they hear the Gospel preached, and are told what Christ is, and see men rejoicing in Him, almost without any sympathy whatever.

And so it comes to pass that the whole of human life—its industry, its civic economy, its social fabric, which was meant to be a grand means of grace, training men not only to outward thrift, but through this, to a nobler reason and spirituality—it comes to pass that these things, instead of promoting the objects for which men were created, are making them carnal, secular. This world, which was meant to be a symbolization of the other life, becomes a curtain, and hangs before that life, and shuts out the light of it. All the processes of society and nature that were meant to teach us of God; all the economic forces that exist among men; all the sweet relationships of social life, in father and mother, and brother and sister, and friend and neighbor, which were meant to be so many teachers of the various inflections of life, designed to give us some conception of the nature and disposition of the great Father in Heaven—these things are perverted to wrong uses and made to teach men falseness, to hide the truth from them, and to render them blind to those things which above all others they ought to see.

Men thus go on exerting the whole force of their life in producing moral deformities. Dwarfs are usually not simply smaller than other men, but deformed. The hands and the feet will perhaps be enormously large, and the body and legs and arms excessively small. No person takes pleasure in looking at a deformity of the body. It is a painful sight for any one to behold. Men sometimes shrink with irrepressible shudderings from each others physical deformities. And yet you are so familiar with deformity within, that you can without shrinking or experiencing any pain, see men destroy their whole moral nature, or leave it almost ungrown, the hands and feet by which they work and walk in this world being, like those of the dwarf, overgrown; but conscience, and veneration, and faith, and hope, and love, and sweet divine sympathy, being almost in the bud, scarcely unrolled, and not at all devel

oped. Men are living so as to dwarf themselves in their higher nature; and when they come to the hour of death they will not be able to carry out with them that for which they have given their whole life. The thing that men work for, and sacrifice everything for, in this world, is that which they cannot carry one step beyond the grave. And their better nature, which they have cramped, and crippled, and deformed, and destroyed, and sacrificed, is the only part which they can take out of life with them. Having made themselves morally hideous for the sake of earthly things, they leave all those earthly things behind them at death, and take with them moral cripplings, moral hideousness, moral deformity, into the other life; into that profound mystery of the future; into that great void—no, into that land of joys and of woes; into that land which no human thought can fathom.

In the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, there are chasms into which one may throw stones, and listen, and listen, and listen, and hear no answer. So deep are they that no sound returns.

Men stand on the verge of the eternal world, and throw over their questions, and listen, and listen, and no answer comes back. Nor do we know anything about that world, except that Jesus, who came from it—Jesus the pure, the serene, the sweet, the gentle—said, "These shall go away into everlasting life, and those into everlasting punishment." That is all we know—just this simple separation of the bad from the good forever, in the world that is to come. And we take the mighty enginery of this world; we take all its forces, and all its incitements, and all its treasures, the whole royalty of its wealth, to cripple and destroy that part of ourselves which is to go out of this life; and all the things that we have lived for we shall leave behind. And so, having been blind all the way through life, we go to be blind in the land of darkness beyond.

My dear friends, is not this true, to your own personal knowledge? All you that have not been enlightened by the saving power of the Holy Ghost, all you that have not felt the power of the truth as set home by the Spirit of the living God, is it not true that you are blinded—blinded to the love of Christ; blinded to the sacrifice of Christ; blinded to your obligations to Christ? Are you not blind to the great economy of truth that is going on silently, solemnly, and surely above your heads, and around about you?

All the earth is moving. The Lord God, who sits regent, is not deterred by philosophy. His cause goes forward, in the church, and out of the church; by ministers, and in spite of ministers; with skeptical philosophies, and with faith running to the other extreme. Under all circumstances, the great Kingdom of God—the kingdom of reason, the kingdom of justice, the kingdom of truth and sympathy, the king-

dom of love and gladness, the kingdom of purity—is gaining ground. It is growing stronger and stronger in all the earth. Selfishness does not stop it; and all man's pride, foaming out against it, does not stop it.

Since the sun has begun to come back, who can stop the growing day? Who now can make the hours dark that the sun is making light? It lingers longer in the west, and comes up earlier in the east, and the day is growing. And let the north blow out its puffs of ice as much as it will; let the snow come as much as it will, they cannot keep the summer off. It is coming. It is advancing through the air. I hear the birds coming. I smell the flowers, blooming. From far southern latitudes the sun is advancing. The summer will be here before long.

And so, he that is the Sun of Righteousness is bringing in the summer-day of redemption; and all men's belief and wickedness and foaming passions may set themselves against it, but it comes through the air. It comes through the ages. It comes by the mighty power of the omnipotent God. And no man shall stop it. The day will yet come when it shall be triumphant over all. And you shall see it—some of you in sympathy and rejoicing; and some of you, I fear, on the other side, on the left, with scowling sadness. Woe be to those that are not on the Lord's side when he comes in the day of his power, to execute final justice and judgment!

May God grant, when Christ is proclaimed to you, now, to-day, that you may wipe away the films from your eyes, and throw away those passions that hide the light of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and that you may rise up and call yourselves the sons of light, and begin to see, to love, to trust, to follow, that you may finally reign, with exceeding great joy, in your Father's Kingdom.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, Almighty God, that thou hast made thyself known to us in the world which thou hast created; but more especially do we rejoice that thou hast recorded thy truth and thy government by the word of holy men that spake of old as they were moved by thy Spirit, and that thou hast gathered up and garnered those ripest and best experiences of men under thy care, and made them our models and our guides. We thank thee that in the fulness of times all other truth is surpassed in fullness and gloriousness by the revelation of thyself in Jesus Christ. Through him we now discern the truth of the living God, no longer afar off; no longer hid under forms of dread authority; no longer clothed with power and with faith ministered unto all that fear. We are brought near, now, by love. We behold the face of our Father which is in heaven. We are in sympathy with thee. Thou comest for us, and dost wait upon our weakness. Thou dost forget our transgression, and thy chastisement is a healing. Whom thou lovest thou chastenest, and scourgest the sons whom thou receivest. And now we behold thy blessed Spirit, enlightening, comforting, guiding, inspiring, all abroad throughout the earth. Whatever is good, or aspires toward goodness, is helped by thy Spirit; and the blind are led in a way which they knew not of, and the poor are made rich in a way that they sought not, and those that are out of the way are found of Him who goes to seek and to save the lost. Thou art filling the world and time with the sweet influences of thy nature; and this earth that began far away from thee, and hast wallowed in savageness, thou art through the ages ameliorating, building up into righteousness, bringing nearer and nearer, and filling with thy Spirit. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. To us how slow is the work! but thou dwellest in eternity, and thou art not hurried, as our steps are that must fall fast or ever life and its light are gone. Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may have faith to believe that that is best done, though it takes many generations of our lives, measured upon the scale of thine own greatness. Grant that we may learn to be patient, and not to doubt, and not to fear the progress of thy work in this world. Thou hast sown the seed; thou wilt reap the harvest. Thou hast begun the work, so different from our conceptions, so full to us, yet, of darkness and mystery; but thou wilt complete it in righteousness. And the heavens shall praise thee; and all shall rejoice before thee that see thy goodness and thy wisdom, and all the marvels of it in time. Grant, we pray thee, that we may be of that blessed number who yet shall stand at thy right hand, to see thee cleared, and the way of righteousness made plain, and God vindicated in the eyes of all the universe, that he has been just and true and merciful. Grant, we beseech thee, that we may not be among those that harden their hearts, that blind their eyes, that stop their ears, that refuse to love thee, and are turned away as thine enemies, and are not permitted to enter into thy glory. Grant, we pray thee, O Lord, that we may be among that blessed band who love the Savior, and who by love are transformed into his image, and are led by his hand, step by step, up to all the heights of glory. For the time we should be teachers; and yet, we have need to learn what are the first principles. We should have gone on unto perfection, not stopping to lay again the foundation. Alas! that we linger; that our victories are so inconclusive; that our battles are fought over and over and over again.

Lord Jesus, grant that we may have such a quickening influence, such an indwelling of thy power, that we may be able to defeat thine enemies and ours, so that they shall be utterly destroyed, and that their dominion over us shall cease. Lead us to higher and higher attainments in the Christian life. Grant that our own souls may become so transformed by the multiform working of love, that we shall discern more beauty in thee, and more wondrous excellencies in thy law, and in the life of true Christian faith. May it be granted to us to discern the truths that are within the vail, and to live above the senses, in that invisible realm of holy thoughts, and pure affections, and noble aspirations; in that realm where thou thyself dost dwell.

And grant, we pray thee, that all hindrances may be taken away. Take away from us all known sins; all things that limit and hinder the conscience; all things that sully it; all things that diminish the power of affection; all things that make us proud and

selfish and worldly. And may we seek to prepare our hearts so that they shall be guest-chambers for thine indwelling. And come, O thou best Friend, Jesus, Son of God, and very God—come to us with all thy power of love, of light, of gentleness, of patience, of goodness. Work mightily in us, until everything that is offensive to thee is subdued; until all the passages of our nature are cleansed; until our sins are taken away, and all things are made pure and sweet before thee. So grant that thy work may abound in every one of us. And may we strive thereto, and watch therefor, from day to day, living as in the sight of that blessed vision which cannot be far from any of us, and which is near, very near, to some of us. Grant, O Lord, our God, that we may begin to feel the drawing of that world toward which we go; and may we more and more look away from the things that are seen, unto the things that are invisible. More and more may we measure the things with which we dwell from day to day, not by the estimate of men, nor by their worldly value, but by their relations to our immortality, and to the thought of God, and to the opinion of those that are to be our companions in heaven.

And grant, we pray thee, that our households may be sanctified. May our intercourse glow more with true Christian love and faithfulness toward one another; and may we be bound together in the blessed bond and fellowship of a common faith, and learn to bear one another's burdens; learn to love one another; learn to desire one another's welfare as much as our own; and in honor to prefer one another.

And grant that this Church may be filled with thy presence, and be an honor and glory to thy name. And we pray that thou wilt bless all thy churches of every name. May the truth more and more abound in them. May the things which hinder their usefulness be taken out of the way. May there prevail a co-operative zeal in all the sects of thy one church upon earth. Let thy kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness come among all nations. Overturn oppression everywhere. Destroy ignorance, which is the mother thereof. Grant that men may be delivered from the bond of superstition. And may men grow up more and more into a manhood pure and full of goodness. May all the earth at last see thy salvation.

Which we ask in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thy blessing may rest upon the word which has been spoken. Thou hast wrought in the greatness of thy strength as one that traveled alone in the wilderness of time. From thee has come all the strength that men have had. And martyrs, and holy men, and apostles, and confessors, have been filled with thy light. Borrowed it was, and their strength has been but something of thine. Thou only hast been strong; thou only hast been patient—thou that art upholding the heavens; thou that art ransoming the earth. Grant, O Lord God! that man's opposition may be laid aside. Oh! come again to give sight to the blind, thou that didst heal them when upon earth. Touch the hearts of men, and bring them to life, thou that didst raise the dead. Grant, O Lord Jesus, that there may be those this morning who shall see that life is going ill with them; that their habits are engrossing them; that they are losing more and more the sensibility of things sweet and pure and true and elevating. And grant that they may search their hearts, and see how they are leading lives of resistance to God; how they turn themselves away from the law of spirituality; how they are not obedient to it, neither indeed can be. Grant, we pray thee, that there may be heart-searchings among all of us. May we know whether we are children of God or not; whether Christ is precious to us or not; whether or not we are following him earnestly, and longing more and more for the fulfillment of his will in us. May our houses be set in order. May all that we have to do in life be done quickly. The day is coming. The summons is out. Already thy messengers are on the wing for some of us. Oh! grant that we may not be caught asleep, or unprepared. And when the summons comes, and we are called to go, oh! grant, though it may seem to those behind as the setting of our sun, it may seem to us as the rising of our everlasting day. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PERFECT PEACE.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."—1 PET. I. 8, 9.

This passage points to a higher form of experience than is common among Christians. If such language be applied to the earlier experiences of Christian people, it will discourage them.

When a young botanist brings in from the field a flower, and compares it with some magnificent drawing of the same flower; or when he chances to pluck an imperfect flower by the wayside, too early developed for its own good, frost-bitten, and dwarfed, and compares it with the same flower as it has been developed by the hand of skill under glass, or under the most favorable circumstances in the garden, large, glowing, and perfect, he is tempted to throw away his specimen, and say, "It is not the same thing. I have not found the flower." And yet, it is the same thing, though the stage of development is very different.

Nothing is more discouraging than for persons to attempt to measure their experiences in the Christian life by taking the ultimate and final forms which moral feelings assume after a life of inspiration and of providential development, and comparing the nascent states, the buds, the earlier blossoms, with the later stages, and making these later stages a test of the reality of the earlier ones.

It is true that there is an *unspeakable joy* in Christian hearts. There is a *perfection of glory*. There is a *heavenly gift*—a gift which, as is declared here, is the very *end of our hope*. And it is *salvation*. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." This glory, this gift and this salvation are spoken of as belonging to this present state of existence. They do belong to it?

I wish to speak, this morning, upon the higher conditions of Christian experience in this life.

We ought to dismiss from our minds, entirely, the mechanical idea of conversion and experience, as if Christians were so many gold coins

SUNDAY MORNING, Feb. 20, 1870. LESSON: GAL. III. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 365, 430, 1262.

stamped in the mint, exactly alike in weight, in figure, in letter, in milling, and in every other element. We must remember that Christians are infinitely various. We should understand that the Christian religion is not a name for a certain outward and theoretic system. Nor is it a name for a prescribed and definite round of experiences that may be counted and perfectly described.

The Christian faith is our name for all living experiences which are ever bred in the human soul by the power of God. It would be just as inappropriate to say that music was simply and only that which had been thought out and uttered by instruments hitherto, and not all that ever might be thought out by new geniuses under new musical inspiration, as to say that the Christian faith was merely a given number of doctrines, or a given number of usages, or a given line and circle of experiences.

That term, *Christian faith*, signifies the possibility of the human soul under the divine guidance of God and inspiration. And all that is ever to be thought aright, all that ever is to be experienced in that direction which the soul takes when it works up toward its God, belongs to Christianity. And the unuttered parts of Christianity, the undeveloped truths of Christianity, which are to come through human hearts and human life, I fain would believe are the major parts.

Hence, whatever the soul comes to, whatever it gains or legitimately develops, under the divine influence and guidance, is a part of Christianity.

Christianity is to be found in the living experiences of Christ's elect, and is not to be confounded with what has been felt. It includes all the possibilities of the mind. It is *Christ in you the hope of glory*, with all the fruits of that indwelling. And the infinite variety of such fruit of the Spirit can be imagined in no way so well as by the infinite variety of the products of the sun, varying from the lichens and dwarfed shrubbery of the Arctic circles, with the increasing warmth of every latitude, to the magnificent tropics. All these things, from the extreme north to the equator, are children of the sun.

But, though variety is infinite in Christian experience, yet it is all one. It is all the fruit of the Spirit of God working upon the quality or faculty of the human soul.

In this great variety, we may help ourselves by some classification. And for all general purposes it is enough to say that true Christian life is to develop itself, or to fall, under one of three heads or departments.

1. The earliest and the lowest stage is that of conscience. We do not generally begin our Christian life at the point of love. That comes somewhat later. We begin to think, to purpose, to strive, to pray, under the mingled influence of fear and conscience. Self-condemnation,

fear of consequences, the censure of our better moral nature—these work in the beginning, and bring us on to the first line of true Christian experience.

The first steps of Christian life in this lower department, are those of deliberate choice. The lower Christian life is a life of voluntary purpose kept up every day. It is a state in which duty is the main-spring. In all stages of religious development, duty is implied, and duty exists in some form or other, but in its first stage it has preëminence, it stands out; it is the master motive; it is the one ruling thing. "What is right? What ought I to do? What is it my duty to do?"—this is the spirit of the lower or first stage of Christian experience. We forbear a thousand things because we ought not to do them. We perform many things that have no sap in them to our taste, because we ought to do them. We keep days or refuse days, we keep ordinances or refuse ordinances, from a bare sense of right or wrong, as the case may be. And we are called at every hour, and at every moment, almost, to reject some things on purpose. We struggle up to a choice, and say, "Thank God! I have a victory, and I can say No." We put the wrong behind us; but it is by a perpetual effort. We are at the oar, and every inch that we make upon the river of life is one that we pull for. We have no current yet, and very little wind of inspiration, to drive us along. It is work of the arm and of the hand. It is purpose, *purpose*, PURPOSE, all the way through.

It is in this stage that a man has a large sense of morality. Men look upon their relations one to another, and their relations to the world, and their relations to God, their occupations, and the duties growing out of them; they endeavor to accept these relations, and their consequent duties, as the law of life; and they are continually driving up their performance of duties. Thus they become earnest; they become self-exacting; they even become self-persecuting, and sometimes live in a state of perpetual self-condemnation because their sense of duty is more keen than their power of performance. Their ideal is flashing; the real drags behind, and is dull.

In this lower, this perfunctory stage of Christian experience, when we are trying to do well, when we are depending upon our will for our ability to do well, and when we march up to duties and assail them on purpose, there is very little moral intuition in our life; very little in voluntariness; very little spontaneity; very little gush and unthought-of outflow.

In *terms*, God may be the Father of persons in this condition; the Saviour may be their pitying Friend, in *terms*; but these higher conceptions are occasional only. Men watch for them; and bless the hour when they really have them; but they do not find these their

constant experience. The *spirit* is, that God is a master, if not even a task-master; that he is the Judge, the Governor, the Law-maker, and the Magistrate that administers law. Men live in a state of responsibility; in a state of care and anxiety. And every day they make up their account, as it were. Every day they reckon with themselves. Every day they think whether they have a right to be at peace with God. Every day they are under condemnation. And every day they go and pray it away—they do not know how or why—till they feel better again. They can give no philosophy of the change which they experience. They are honest; they are earnest; they have set their face to live according to the commands of Christ; they have begun to find out a great many of those commands; and they are fighting against their passions, and their old habits, and the influences of the world, to enable them to do it. They have all the sovereignty of their reason and will on one side, and are hewing their way; but it is all work. Now and then there is an hour of lightness and of joy. They do not know where it came from, or why it went away; but they are very thankful for it.

The main principle is this—bracing up, and saying, "I have begun or found the Christian course. Oh! that I may be faithful to the end. Pray for me, that I may hold out. I will persevere. Get thee behind me, Satan. I am a warrior." That is the spirit in which they live, fighting for the right; fighting for duty; fighting to keep their vows and covenants; pressing upward; often overthrown; often overcome; often driven back; but maintaining this battle and struggle of life incessantly. And it is a life in which, the clearer your reason, and the more exacting your conscience, the more wretched you are. Woe be to that man who ever matches himself against his own ideal! Woe be to that man who is clear-eyed to see the invisible, and attempts to make the visible and the real a portraiture of it. It is the seventh-of-Romans experience over again in every man's life.

2. Out of this stage, sometimes by one history, and sometimes by another, people emerge into a second one, and a very much higher one—one in which they have heard Christ saying to them, "Henceforth I call you, not servants, but friends." They have been God's hired men; they have been working on his farm; they meant to work all the time; they gave him the advantage of all that they possessed; they were faithful to his property; they attempted to be good, honest workmen and servants of the Lord Jesus—with an emphasis on the word *servants;* they endeavored to do their duty fully. But there comes a time when they are called out of the field, and out of the cottage, into the mansion. And the Master of the mansion says to them, "Henceforth I call you not servants;" and takes them by the hand, saying, "I

call you friends." And they are friends thereafter. They are now conscious that their feet have been placed on a different footing; they think differently of him, and feel differently toward him. And they live differently.

It is this second stage that is the terminus of most Christian experience—even of that which is ecstatic and high. Of that stage I will give a few words of explanation.

It is a stage of experience which does not do away with a sense of duty, or of morality, or of conscience; but it finds a motive power higher than it has had before, by which men can perform duty and keep conscience.

In old times, when women would have bread, they sat down to their hand-mill, and worked the stone, themselves grinding; and they got by exercise the digestion which they needed for their food. And that was a great deal better than starving. But now, when men want meal, or flour, mills are arranged in just the same way, so far as the stone is concerned. There has not been any improvement in that for four thousand years. It grinds on precisely the same principle to-day that it did in the Arab tents, or on the plains of Syria. But the motive power has changed. First came wind. That was better than the hand of man. Afterwards came water. And now vapor is used. The difference is not that grinding has ceased, or that the principle of grinding has changed, but simply that the motive-power has changed, so that we now grind more, and grind better, and grind with ten thousand times less effort, than men used to.

In the beginnings of Christian life men grind their own food, by their own hands, and work for it. When they come into a higher stage, the difference is not that the food or the grinding is dispensed with. There is just the same sense of duty and moral rectitude; there is just the same sense of endeavor; but there is a higher inspiration by which the work is done; there is a new class of feelings that rise up and become the motive-power of the soul.

It is this stage in which love and hope become the true motive power. Men rise so far toward God in conception and sympathy that they begin to be conscious that the divine nature quickens in them, more than anything else, the love and hope principle. So that they have all the trust, all the familiarity and all the power that comes from love; and they have all the buoyancy and cheerfulness and scope that comes from the future. And when hope and love predominate, they do not destroy conscience. They merely cover it down. In the beginning of Christian life conscience is like a man's skeleton. A skeleton is indispensable; but a man is not comely who has nothing but that. It is not until love and hope begin to give flesh and skin that

cover the hard skeleton, that the Christian life takes on fair proportions. The backbone is there, and ought to be; the other bones are there, and cannot be dispensed with; but they are hidden, they are covered, and men are beautiful in life.

In Christian experience, then, you will never lose out conscience, or the sense of right. It is fundamental. It is a part of the inherent frame-work of the human-soul, without which love would have nothing to hang itself on—without which there would be no place for flesh, no place for skin, and no place for color.

But as, in life, we are not accustomed to think of each other anatomically, thank God, as the sum of lungs, and stomach and liver, and what not; as we are accustomed to take each other in apparent unity, without analysis; so in Christian life we come to a state in which we do not think of conscience, or morality, or this and that thing which is right. We come under the inspiration of love and hope, which are themselves a nobler way of working out these consciences and moralities than any other.

This a more buoyant and more fruitful state of mind, and one that is more faithful, a thousand times, than the other. There probably never was a better sense of exact right and wrong than you shall find in many nurses who, going out to service, take the child, and love it a good deal, and, by night and by day, suffer for it all that must be suffered if it is to be raised to virtue and excellence. The great principle of vicarious atonement is the condition of all growth in human life. It is figured to us again in each one of every household on earth. That which Christ did for the universe, and set forth on the grandest pattern, is hinted at and reproduced and symbolized in every man, in similar ways, and everywhere. And whoever brings up a child, suffers for that child. And nurses will suffer for a child in bringing it up, on the principle of fidelity, as gloriously as that principle can be applied. But the mother stands by; and the child falls sick; and then will she trust that child to fidelity? There is no more self-denying creature than its nurse. She will lie awake with it night after night, and minister to its every want. But that will not do. There is nothing like the mother. And what is the difference between a mother and a nurse? With the exception of the difference which there is between the principle of love and the principle of conscience or fidelity, they are just alike. But O! the mother has a fountain of love which no nurse can have till she is a mother. It is that *love* which is the higher power. Out of it, unconsciously, comes fruit. Out of it come noble influences that you never can get by mere purpose, or forethought, or volition. It is the intuition of love, it is the spontaneity of love, it is the creative power of love, that make it superior to any lower forms

of life. And if Christians can gain such a view of Deity—(the poorest word in the language by which to represent God! I never knew anybody in this world that worshipped only a vague and generic conception of God in the Father. I never knew anybody to come to clasping love of God except where he was represented through the personation of Christ Jesus. That manifestation of the divine Being is just adapted to our want. It exactly fits our nature. Toward the Lord Jesus Christ, as our God, every heart can flow out. There is a possibility of a love toward Christ which shall transcend every other, and be fruitful of religious experience, and a helpfulness, that you never can get from the dominancy of conscience, or from the controlling influence of reason, or from voluntariness, in any man's Christian life) —but, when Christians can come into this state of love and hope, if they can advance to this middle stage of experience, fear in all its lower forms ceases entirely. Fear never ceases, and never ought to cease; but it rises and becomes an inspiration of higher qualities.

You can use a mallet or hammer in two ways. You can smite with it directly on the substance—the wood or the metal; or you can take it as a force and strike against the handle of some other instrument; and then it lends its force to the awl, or the chisel, or whatever tool you may be using.

So our basilar passions, the powers of our lower nature, we may use directly, in the form of temper or appetite or inclination; or they may be otherwise turned to account, and, like a hammer or mallet, be made to strike against higher faculties or emotions, so that they shall lend their force to those. Thus conscience may become intoned by the stroke of the lower feelings, hope may become strengthened by the stroke of the lower feelings, all the higher feelings may become energized by the stroke of the lower feelings, which cease to have their own direct stroke, but merely lend themselves, as a hammer or mallet, to the higher feelings. Fear, for instance, never ceases to act, though it ceases to act directly. It works on the conscience, to make it sharper. It works upon hope, and makes it more earnestly solicitous. It works upon love, and makes it more anxious, and fills it with tremulousness of solicitude lest it should not be strong enough, and disinterested enough. And thus fear dies out by giving strength to the higher feelings, and giving strength to them each of its own spirit and kind. But as to the original principle of fear in its own masterhood, it dies.

In this second stage of Christian experience of which I am speaking, duty is converted to inclination. Duties remain, and men perform them as duties; but they become pleasures. And they are more and more automatic. Habit at last converts the greater part of our life into the joy and the glory of active involuntariness. And involuntariness is

the test of all excellence. No man does anything well who does it on purpose. As long as he is obliged to do it on purpose, it is done poorly. It is not until a person can do a thing without thinking that he can do it perfectly. No man that studies the stroke which he makes is likely to make it skilfully. No painter who has to think how to combine his pigments, and then has to think how and where they are to go on, can be a true artist. No engraver who has to watch with his mind every movement of the burin, is a genius in his profession. The true workman always does the work first, and then follows and sees why he did it, and reasons upon it.

And as it is in physical things, so it is in moral. Though there is a stage in which we are obliged to think, and then do, it is the earlier one; and the next stage is that in which we do the thing spontaneously, without thinking. And in Christian life it is so. When a man has risen to that state of love and hopefulness which breeds in him all divine sympathies, and all human sympathies; when he has all diligent continuance in well-doing; when he has drilled himself so that he is gentle, and sweet-minded, and humble, and soft-voiced, and gracious, and charitable in consideration of other men's thoughts, and full of peacefulness, and full of that disposition which bears cordial to men according as they have it; when by the summer of love he is ripened into these things till he performs all kind offices without thinking—then he has risen to the state of spontaneity in Christian life. And if you meet such a man, and ask him, "Do you do your duty?" he will say, "Duties? I do not know that I have any duties." What has become of his duties? What are duties? First, manure at the bottom of the vine, spaded in—and by hard work at that. In the alembic of the roots it is caught up, and refined, and separated, and hidden, and lost; and it ascends in the sap. And we begin to see it next in the leaf. And how different it is now from what it was as it lay as a black mould at the bottom! It is transformed. But go on. Now it is the fragrant blossom. Oh! how small! but oh! how sweet! Wait a little. Now it is the purple cluster, full of rich juices. The sun has wrought it, and the dews have baptized it. It is a child of the summer, most beautiful to behold. Yet there below is the father. It started from duty, which, by the invisible influence of love, has worked itself up, until at last it has taken on the forms of clustering beauty and admirable uses.

So in life men take on things first because they ought to; at length they practice them because they like to; and finally they do them because they do not think anything about them. But, subtly, at the bottom, there is the sense and act and fact of duty.

"Let me wash my own babe," says the little impatient mother. Since it is the first and only one, it is the most admirable of all created

things! "Let me do it." And yet, methinks about four years ago, when this maiden was requested to do that very act, she snarled her pretty face because it was so disagreeable and tedious, washing a babe that was squirming, and running, and full of playful ugliness. But now that it is *her* child, she will not let anybody wash it for her. It is her blossoming hour, it is her day-star hour, in which she is permitted to perform offices that she once thought were burdensome. They are just as much duties now as they were before; only she is working from a plane so much higher, that she does not think of them as duties. But if she should lose the gladness, she would come down a peg; and if she should lose fidelity, she would come down another peg; and by and by she would strike the old sense of duty. There it is, down at the bottom; only, spontaneity has cushioned it, and put springs over it. She is working from a motive so high that she has lost sight of duty; but the duty is waiting to catch her if she falls.

And so in Christian life, duty is never obliterated. The higher feelings may work so much quicker and easier as to outrun duty; but it is a reserve force, latent, coiled up like a spring, below. And we are doing our work in life by the forces of love, of faith, and of hope, with joy in the Holy Ghost.

In this stage it is, when persons have come thoroughly into it, that all holy exercises, all Christian graces, all activities and labors, all sufferings and trials, become first joyful, then spontaneous, and finally habitual. It is in this stage that we pass into that state which we call the *state of liberty*, the *state of adoption*, of which the Scripture speaks. We are the children of God, and live at home, and are never afraid to see our Father's face, and are always glad to hear His voice. We dwell in His presence, and there is nobody that we love so much as we do Him. We are children, and live at home, and have liberty.

This is considered an eminent state of Christian attainment; and it is; for it is itself an advanced step in a long line of degrees.

3. Now the question comes, "Is there anything higher than this?" Yes. There is a stage that is higher than this; and it is just as marked, just as definite and certain, as this middle stage is certain and definite and marked above the elementary or preliminary one. As love and hope created an entirely different development of experience from that which was developed by conscience, or fear, which is characteristic of the initial and earlier state, so there is a later state, which is more difficult to describe, but which I shall try to hint and define.

It is a state in which the whole soul has been carried up to the highest degree. In this state the soul has been trained, it has been practiced, it has been habituated, in the highest forms of moral attainment, until it has, as a part of its daily experience, a transcendent per-

ception of divine being—soul, and reason and imagination: until it not only sees God by voluntary thought, but sees him everywhere involuntarily; until the world itself changes, as it were, its formation, and everything bears the impress of the divine. As the poet sees all natural objects in the light of beauty; as the artist sees all things in nature in the line of art; as the mechanic sees the forces and principles in the material world in the light of mechanical laws; as the scientist looks upon nature in relation to his science; so there is a state of mind in which everything that exists in nature and society suggests to the soul the sense of God. All things reflect him. They are symbols of him. Every voice has something of the divine voice. Every form of glory brings something of the divine to the mind. Everything that is great or little draws the soul toward, and not away from, the divine Being, till one can say, "He fills the heavens; he fills the earth; he fills the body; he fills the soul; and my life is hid in his life. My life is but a taper; His life is the sun; and what taper can be seen while the sun is abroad in the day?"

Then the invisible spirit land becomes more potential than the invisible and material one, to those that have risen into this higher state. Their thoughts are so used to conversing with things that are not present, but that lie beyond; they dwell so much in the other world; their treasure has been so long there; their imagination has become so accustomed to winging its flights over the celestial city, or within it, that the soul has formed the habit of living in the sphere of the invisible and spiritual. *Set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*, has become not so much a rule as an experience with them, and they live in the unseen.

With this comes a change which is more difficult to describe, but which is in its effect of transcendent value. I mean that by which man's will becomes coincident with, or swallowed up in, the will of God. I do not mean that one's will as the antithesis of compliance, or as the expression of selfishness, bows down to a sense of rectitude, to a sense of beauty, or to a sense of excellency—though that is included in it. I do not mean that one's conscious personality is ever lost; but I do mean that there is a state in which one's soul is consciously swallowed up in the soul of God. I *know* it is so. I have felt it, and I see the analogies of it on every side.

Nothing is more common than selfish love. Nothing is more common than that lower form of love in our social relations which enriches, to be sure, and shines upon the path of life, and brings many fruits that are most desirable to the touch and taste; and yet, it is a lower form of love. There is no true love but that which tends to obliterate the sense of personality, so that persons' natures intersphere; so that

there is almost no conscious personality in companions of a household, their reasons being consentaneous, their moral affections moving them to mutual sympathy, their feelings twining together, so that they can say, "Our lives are separate, and yet they are one, and we are one."

There never can be this oneness of life so far as the body is concerned. If there is anything that is a unit, it must be the spirit. And there is such unity in rare instances on earth. There are natures that know even in their mortal relations what it is to be so identified with another's being, that without that other they wither and die. Their roots grow together; all their vitality is in them; they live by them while they live; and when one is taken the other cannot long remain. Such persons, left behind, are not heart-broken. They are merely like a plant that bleeds to death, being cut from its own root.

Now, that state which we rarely see among men, but which we know is possible because we see the conditions of it in life—how much more is it possible where God is the Lover; where the soul may be magnetized, fired, and filled with the Holy Ghost, with the presence of God, so that its reason, and moral sentiments, and affections, and yearnings for purity and glory and immortality, are met in the bosom of the divine fullness, and we are scarcely separable from Him in whom we live.

Out of this state there come intuitions and ecstatic bursts of experience that cannot be written. There have been beautiful strains of poetry, beautiful hymns, that are angelic in their ministration, and will be as long as the world lasts; but the unwritten thoughts, and the unwritten feelings overmatch the vocal hymns. What men have thought and felt is immeasurably beyond what they can express. There have been souls in which the calm, the peace, did *pass all understanding*, and into which God did come, and *abide* and *sup*, as Christ promised that he would. There have been souls that have been conscious that they carried their Christ with them day and night. They have lived in such a state that he dwelt in them. It may be overclouded, just as our life is by the period of sleep; but as, though we have lost our life in sleep, we wake up again, so, though this state may be overclouded by care and duty, and may for a moment intermit, it returns. And these persons abide in it, identified with God, living in the very highest realm of spiritual feeling and spiritual intuition, not far, I believe, from commerce with the spirits of just men made perfect. The distance between the soul and the other life being reduced to a mere abstraction, as it were, they live upon the borders of the heavenly land.

Here, then, are these three stages: the first, which I call *the stage of struggle*; the second, which I call *the stage of victory*, which follows struggle; and the third, which I call *the stage of peace*, which follows victory. These are the three great groups of experiences into

which I should divide the Christian life. With regard to the third, many questions will arise.

In the first place, is this last experience a gift of God, or is it something that is wrought out in us? Both. I believe that God sends into this life priests. As he sends into this world men equipped to teach by poetry, and they are born for that long before the school finds them; as he sends into this world men that are mechanics, men that are musicians, and men that are orators, and that are born to their respective spheres of labor; so I believe God sends men that are to be the illuminators of the world in things spiritual, and that they are born to it. As in the case of the prophets, by their own declarations; as in the case of Jeremiah, who declares that he was called, a prophet from his mother's womb, having the adaptation in his birth; so there are men who are called to be spiritual leaders—men adapted to this higher stage of Christian development—men born to it. And the moment they are born into Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, they pass, as it were, understandingly, through the period of struggle. And they do not tarry in the realm of victory—on the middle ground; they rise at once into the higher stage of perfect peace, and of wondrous insight and intuition and glory.

And these are the men that ought to lead the world. These are the men that stand to give to our ideals something more definite, and to show us what we are to strive for. Out of that higher realm of experience they ought to speak truths which shall take away the coarseness of our lower forms of truth, and which shall fill up the thought of the Christian church and of Christian experience with the more heavenly conceptions which belong to them. They are born to it. And Christ serves himself by sanctifying them, enlightening them, and bringing them into their true sphere and function in this life. He glorifies himself by such persons, the greatest number of whom have come to this state, by first going through the process of volition, and then developing, from stage to stage, the different Christian conditions. A man may be born into the Christian life by the stage of struggle. He may be for years and years fighting his passions, and fighting his circumstances. But by-and-by there comes to him a glorious day of insight and deliverance. In the hour of prayer, it may be, or in the great congregation, or in some sounding affliction, or in some walk or meditation, Christ Jesus rises before him in a way that he never has seen him before, filling the heaven, filling infinite spheres, filling his soul, and by his blessed power lifting him above the struggling stage, and into the stage of victory, so that he says, "By faith I live, and by faith I will live all the rest of my days."

And so he goes on for years and years, until at last, at some blessed

touch, and in some blessed hour, he knows not when nor how, he rises into the upper state, and finds, without thought or effort, that transcendent peacefulness, that wondrous communion, that exhalation of the soul, all of whose tendencies are now upward, so that he lives in the bosom of his God.

Thus he has gone through the regular periods of evolution, and has come to that higher stage.

But may anybody come to it? Yes, anybody. In its fullest form? No. But to every man, according as God has ministered the gift to him, to every man according to his own order, to every man according to his own created capacity, this is the last, as it is a proper development of Christian life. First there is the struggle, next there is the victory, and last there is the coronation of peace. And no man should think of himself as having completed his Christian course if he is in the first; until he has passed on to the second; until he has progressed out of the second, and come triumphantly into the third. For his own soul's sake, for the church's sake, and for the honor and glory of that God who has called him, he should not stop short of this highest stage.

Is this, then, what men mean when they talk so much of perfection in this life? Is this what men mean when they talk of entire sanctification in this life? Is this what men mean when they talk of holiness in this life, or of their complete salvation from sin in this life? Yes, it is just what they mean. I do not believe a word in their philosophy, but I believe entirely in their facts. If you talk of human perfection, I do not believe in it. There is no perfection here below. If you talk of entire release from sin in this world, I do not believe in that. I do not believe that any man lives who does not sin sometimes. But if you talk of a man as raised up to that state in which to him legality is ended, in which he thinks of himself as not any more a subject of law, but as a subject of liberty and of love, I believe in that.

Why, you keep accounts where you get your groceries; you keep accounts in your lower, fretting life; but what daughter ever kept a running account of love with her mother's heart, as they sit together, and sing together, and talk together, and work together, till they learn to twine their affections round each other, and live in each other, and by each other? What possible thought of law could come into such a life? Who ever thinks of keeping accounts, or measuring, in the sphere of love? Love has its own way, its own liberty.

And the moment a man rises into this higher state, in which his life is suffused by love, and God pours in streams his life down upon the soul, he does not think of law any more, or transgression any more; he no more thinks about whether he is perfect or not. This third and last stage of Christian experience in this world is one in which we are

so swallowed up in the consciousness of God's goodness, and nearness and sweetness and love, that we do not think much about ourselves. Our life is in Christ. And we are not all the time ferretting out transgressions, or looking at this or that wrong that we have done. If we committed sins, we should be sinking down into that lower state where conscience would catch us, and then we should have condemnation enough. But so long as we are living in this state of liberty and higher development, though we are not perfect (no man is perfect; God meant man to be man in this world; and no man is perfect so long as there is anything to be added in his development); yet, so far as the law is concerned, it is dead to those who live by love. There it is, away down below, to catch them if they fall; but if they keep up where they are it will not touch them.

Birds have feet to walk with when they cannot use their wings; but a bird that is not a fool will never use its feet if it can use its wings. And the soul never uses its feet, as it were, to walk with, so long as it can fly and abide in these higher realms.

Thus, the Christian experience of all sects and denominations unitizes itself. The Romanists believe that in their church there are saints who live in this higher state. Their reasons are unsatisfactory; the peculiar language which they employ is exceptionable; but the fact is not to be questioned. The Methodists believe that there are many in their church who have reached the state of *sanctification*. The Congregational church at Oberlin, and other Congregational churches, have in them men who think that they have come to the *unsinning* state, where they are not under the condemnation of the law. The phenomenon I believe in, but the philosophy by which they explain it I do not believe in. Sometimes it is true, sometimes it is partly true, and sometimes it is not true at all. That the power of God lifts those souls that are prepared for it into a higher realm of experience which is always sweet, serene, and beautiful, always victorious, always singing and making others sing, always tearless and joyful, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," as our text has it—that I do believe. I do *know* that people may be lifted up into this state.

Now, Christian brethren; will you dwell at the gate; or will you dwell in the palace; or, dwelling in the palace, will you sit down in the kitchen, or go up into the banqueting hall? In your Christian life, are you in the stage of struggle? Will you abide there, or will you make haste to get from that into the stage of victory, where love is supreme? And will you abide there, or will you rise still further? When one has come to that middle stage, woe to him if he stays there! So easy is it now to rise; so short are the steps; so little is the

flight; so near is the experience, that methinks one should emerge into it at once, and abide there forever.

And if one were living in this higher state, so that his face shone (for it would shine. You cannot have anything in the heart and keep it from the face); if one carried within him, perpetually, those sweet and pure and noble feelings which belong to this higher state, so that his countenance glowed with their light, his very appearance would be a preaching of the gospel of peace to men. In a time when men are swinging from their faith and confidence I despair of books; I despair of arguments. I despair of any special work to save men from unbelief. But no man can resist the argument of holiness brought in a personified form before him, in its gentleness, in its sweetness, in its aspiration, in its love, in all its blossoms and fruits of peace and joy. Let men see that, and they do not want to disbelieve. All their hearts are set a-yearning. No real conception of Christ is reproduced before men, that they do not long to have the same thing in themselves. And out of this yearning comes aspiration; and out of aspiration comes intuition; and out of intuition comes realization; and out of realization come conversion and sanctification. So that no man preaches so much and so effectually as the man that does not speak a word, but whose whole life is one revelation of higher forms of Christian development.

Oh mother! because you are in the household, it does not follow that you are not also in the pulpit. There are these open pulpits; there are these domestic pulpits. The candle that is lit for your table in the cottage, and gives its light there first, shines out of the window also, and throws its rays far down the road, and the weary traveler sees them, and plucks up courage, and says, "There is succor at last!" and follows the light, and finds your house, and is rescued. And while you are giving yourself to your children in sweetness, and love, and prayer and trust, a light shines down the road, to those that have lost their way, and many a soul may be brought, by your example, home to Jesus.

Do not be discouraged because you have not an ampler sphere of testimony. Live, love, trust, and wait, and ere long forever and forever triumph and rejoice!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice before thee, our Father. We take hold of thee by faith. We have learned something of thy nature. Through years thou hast interpreted thyself to our understanding, through our affections and through our lives. Thou art past finding out, in the amplitude of thy being. Yet we are as they who wander in the summer, and, though they cannot compass the whole summer, bring, in their hands, from every field, something which is the symbol of all that they have left. The wondrous glory of the heaven and of the earth is brought to them by the simplest things. And so, though we cannot compass thee, nor by searching find thee out unto perfection, yet our love and patience and hope all bring thee near to us, and there rise before our minds the conceptions of thy grandeur in wisdom, in purity, in gentleness, in love, in long suffering kindness, so that the heavens are not able to contain thee. Thou dost fill immensity, and our spirits sink back, and we rest ourselves. As the dove cannot fly through all the air, but only, according to the strength of its wing, through a little portion of it, so neither are we strengthened to behold thy face in righteousness; to see thee as thou art; and to come into the fulness of that joy which belongs to thy servants. We wait for the revelation. We wait till the weakness of these mortal bodies has passed. We wait for the disclosure of these spirits, when all that we are shall rise up and assert itself, and come to its symmetry, now compressed, and hidden and distorted by these bodies. We yet are to stand forth in fullness, in power, in beauty and in joy, such as eye hath not seen, and such as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. And we bless thee for all this hope. We bless thee that there is something better than treasure, something better than friendship, something better than even character in this mortal life. When thou shalt be all in all; when we shall rise into glorious identification with thee; when we shall know thee as we are known, and move co-ordinate with thee, how will all the things which are most precious, and in this our state of being most needful, seem inferior to us! As the steps by which one rises from the ground to the higher rooms, as soon as they are trod on are left behind, so thou dost teach us that the things most simple and the most needful—the moralities of life, and the virtues of life—are but so many steps by which we shall go higher, to that more blessed and all-comprehending experience which the soul may have in its perfect rest with Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus, is not thy pavilion open? and can it ever be crowded? Can any more come than thou canst entertain? Is there any soul that may not know its perfect rest in Christ? If all the world, if every one of its living creatures, should come to thee, wouldst thou be surprised out of thy generosity? Is it not in thine heart to give, and to give abundantly? And were there millions more, would it not be to swell thy joy? O thou Redeemer! is not thy redemption enough for all mankind, and for all the circumstances and conditions in which they are placed? Canst thou not redeem? Canst thou not set thy people free from sin, even in this life? Canst thou not bear them up in thy hands so that they shall not dash their foot against a stone?

Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be more earnest desires among us, to enter into that hidden life, that more blessed and higher consummation of Christian experience. Oh! let us not be forever on the storm-washed shore. Let us not be forever swept and rocked by the winds. May we at last find that land where are no storms; where is settled peace; from which we behold the battlement afar off, where are wafted snatches of that blessed song which we, too, ere long, shall sing. And we pray that we may gird up our loins, make a new crown of faith, and again press upward and forward, undiscouraged, undismayed, not daunted by suffering, nor by sorrow, nor by any evil that shall come upon us. Holding all our life subject to thy will, may we take or part with whatever is best. May we bear burdens, or find them rolling off, as pleases thee; so that in all things our will and thine shall be one and inseparable.

Grant, we pray thee, to all those who are beginning a Christian life, so far the sight and light of that higher and blessed state, that they may press on with vigor, with faith, and with assured hope. We pray that many more may be drawn into the blessedness of Christian experience. Why should they die as the beasts die? Why should they seek,

groveling, the things that perish in the using? Why should they be separated from all that is pure and noble and divine in life? Why should the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ shine upon us, and not shine upon all?

O Lord! we beseech of thee that thou wilt move upon the consciences of men. Quicken their dormant feeling. Bring to a resolution and to a purpose all wavering and scattering thought. And we pray that there may be many who shall inquire what they shall do to be saved. May their voices be heard telling what the Lord hath done for them. May souls be renewed, sins be forgiven, life be recreated in faith, and thy name be glorified in the life and example of multitudes whom thou hast rescued from the captivity of sin and Satan.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt teach thy people to be like thee. May every one of them have some word of testimony May every one of them have something to say of what the Lord hath done for him. May every one be a preacher of righteousness in the household, or wherever he is. May there be the influence of Jesus Christ exhaling from every one.

And we pray that thou wilt not only bless our Church, and our dear brethren, and the families clustered around about, but remember all sister Churches of every name. And grant that all this great band of Churches may live together not only in peace, not harming each other, but in cordiality, in confidence and cooperative zeal and labor, studying to bear each other's burdens, in honor preferring one another, and laying aside pride and envy, and all those hateful works of Satan. And grant that at last thy garment may be without a seam, undivided. And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the labors of thy servants for the great community in which we dwell.

Remember, we beseech of thee, all the States in this Union, the United States Government, the President of these United States, and all that are in authority with him. Grant that thy Spirit may rest largely upon them, and that they may walk in the way of wisdom. And we pray that thou wilt purify our magistracy and our judges. May all this land see justice becoming truer, purer, nobler and more authoritative among men.

May intelligence spread. May schools and colleges and seminaries of learning be multiplied and blessed, and this whole land throw off its darkness, and superstition, and base bad passions, and rude injustices.

And grant that the Spirit of Christ may pervade the whole nation, and that all the world at last may see thy coming, and behold the truth of thy Gospel, and feel the force of thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken. Grant that there may be more and more of us desirous of rising above the besetments of this mortal life; above our entanglements with the world, with the flesh, with appetite and with passion; above our relations one with another, and with the conduct of affairs. Give us, we beseech of thee, that power of faith by which we may come into the hour of victory, when Christ shall be all in all to us mightier in us than interest, or than our reputation; dearer to us than ourselves; and more lovely than those most loved.

So may we live in this routine of life by Christ's aid. And out of that, Lord Jesus, open thine inner chamber, that we may go in unto thee. And where there are no words; where only calm ecstacy dwells; where is peace profound, without wave—unending peace, and joy which passes all understanding—there may we abide. And so in life, rising to these glories, may we pass from glory to glory, until we stand in Zion and before God.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is."—MARK XIII. 33.

If any man has ever taken a leaf-bud into his hand, and examined it, he has found that while it seemed like a unit—a simple thing in itself—it contained within the first leaf another one; and that within the second there was a third, and on so all the way through, a whole summer's growth being compressed into a form scarcely bigger than the head of a pin.

So it is, as Lord Bacon says, with prophecy, which has a kind of "springing and germinant accomplishment." For, while the words of our Master often seem to have reference to a near and present thing, they are also made, otherwhere, and in the same discourse, to apply to a more remote one, and to one still more remote. You shall find, in one prophecy, wrapped up, like so many leaves in one bud, declarations which respect the death of the individual, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final day of judgment—the great settling-day of this moral experiment of the universe. And all of them lie in a line. Being of one analogy, having moral similarities, they are grouped together. And the same prophecy means the first, the second, and the third.

So it is with the passage from which I have made this selection today. While the context shows—as especially do the parallel passages in other gospels—that the Saviour was speaking of the near approach of the destruction of Jerusalem; yet, at the same time, almost without any possibility of discriminating the points, he shades off, in his teaching, to the great and final judgment. And yet he applies both of these things to the individual fear and the individual fidelity, and makes it an argument for every man to prepare for death.

In Matthew, particularly, there is a group of pictures parabolic. I read some of them to you as part of the opening service.

The first is the picture of a man who had possession in his house, and who, if he had known at what hour the thief would come, would

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have watched. Human life, all that is valuable to a man, all that it is worth his while to save, is like a house, with its precious commodities and treasures in it; and Death is like a thief; and the householder, if he is wise, and has any hint that a thief is coming on a given night, will watch, and be ready for him; so men should watch against that thief Death. But the householder did not know that the thief was coming, and so the thief stole on, and peered into the window, and listened, and raised the sash gently, and thrust himself in, and went to the ascertained place where the treasure was hidden, and took it, and disappeared; and then it was too late for the householder to watch. His treasure was gone. And so, by implication, the Saviour says to every one of us, "Prepare for Death before he comes; for it will be too late to prepare when he has come."

Or, to take another figure, the master goes to a far country on a journey of pleasure or of business, and leaves his house and goods in the hands of his servants, and charges them to take care. And, as is sometimes the case, as soon as the master's eye is off from them, the servants, unfaithful to their trust, and determined to have a good time, now that the master is gone, conspire together, saying, "Nobody will know what we do; nobody will hold us to accountability." And, not dreaming that he is coming back so soon, thinking that his absence will be prolonged for days and days yet, by his business, they go on in their hilarity; and they are in a drunken debauch, and are quarreling, those that are stronger beating those that are weaker. And at that very moment in comes the lord, unexpectedly, and catches them in that gross abuse of his trust, in that outrageous infidelity to their duty. It is too late, then, for them to watch, and make ready for his return. There is no excuse for their conduct; so they are bundled out, all of them. Not one remains. And our Saviour says, "Watch. Your Master is absent. He is coming. If you are all of you wild with dissipated pleasure, abusing reason, abusing conscience, abusing life itself, he will come for you at an hour that you think not of. Be sober; be vigilant; be ready. Let him come when he pleases, by day or by night; and whenever he comes, let him find the household of your heart ready for him."

Then there is the third picture. It is of the marriage feast, or, rather, festival—for, among the Jews, weddings occupied two or three days and nights, and sometimes fourteen days and nights, of rejoicing. It was the custom of the bridegroom, taking some of his companions, to go to the house of the father of the bride; and, so soon as the procession set out from his father's house, or from his house, many of his companions were prepared to go out into the street and join the procession, sometimes throwing flowers, and always carrying torches. And

when they had come to the house of festivity, and gone in, the door was closed, and they spent their hours in social enjoyment.

Our Master says of the ten virgins who were thus waiting to join the bridal procession, that five of them were ready, and five of them were not ready. So, when the procession hove in sight, and the cry came down the street, "Behold! the bridegroom cometh!" and they rose to go out to meet him, half had no oil with which to light their torches. And they begged the others to lend them of their oil. And the others said, "Prepare your own torches; we have only enough oil for ourselves." And they went out to get some oil, and while they were gone the procession went on, and entered the house, and the door was closed. And when they came, afterwards, and knocked, they were rejected. It was too late.

All these pictures bear on this one point—timely preparation to meet God in the other life. All of them have one drift, one meaning; and that is, that men should make their whole life a sober, watchful preparation for the hour of death, and the consequences of it; and that it is disastrous, that it is a piece of temerity and of wickedness, for any man to defer preparing for death until death comes.

It is this subject that I am going to talk to you about this morning—leaving your preparation for the other life until death draws near to you.

Men do not love to think of Death, because they are not on good terms with him. They resort to forgetfulness. They occupy themselves, often, intensely. They rush into pleasures. They count him to be no kind companion, and no pleasant friend, that will insist upon reminding them of dying and death. It is a gloomy thing. All the offices of death are gloomy; and they are made more so by the heathen practices of Christian communities.

Now, death is not in itself anything terrible, as a mere physical event. Most persons die with as little pain as a child goes to sleep; and all the suffering which precedes death is so little in the majority of instances that if it were all summed up and put upon a man who is alive and well, he would be ashamed to shed a tear, or to shrink from the bearing of it. Death in and of itself is merciful. It was not meant that men should be crowded out of life as through a door. When men are prepared to die, nature is as gracious to them in dying, as to an apple, when it is ripe and ready to fall from the bow. The stem itself prepares, as a part of its ripeness, to let go; so that when the least breath of wind, after the moistening by the dew in the night, shakes the apple, it falls easily to the ground.

We do not cling to the bough of life very tenaciously. We do not need to be torn from it by rude handling. Dying is not a thing spe-

cially to be dreaded. No man ever has the toothache in good earnest, no man ever has the rheumatism or neuralgia, that he does not suffer every hour more pain than dying inflicts upon men ordinarily. There are exceptional cases, but this is the general rule. Death is a thing, therefore, not to be dreaded as a physical experience.

In regard to death as the interruption of our plans and affections, it is a thing, certainly, more painful, and to be apprehended with less composure; because death does overhang men in the midst of their love, and in the midst of their schemes; and they have seen among their neighbors what disasters have followed it. One prophesies, and asks, "What will become of my children? What will become of my estate? What will become of these mighty interests which have devolved upon me, and which my hands have controlled and guided?" So that there is a reason more worthy than the fear of pain, why men do not like to think of death.

And yet, even this, philosophy, without any consideration of religion, might very much ameliorate. For, since the world began, has it ever been found that a man died whose place could not be supplied? Has the world mourned because a family mourned? Have children that have lost the guiding parent not been able to find their way into life, and through life? Nature is made so large and so bountiful, and the economy of God's providence is such, that, after all, those who think that they are so important to their estate, to their business, to their families, over-estimate. To be sure, if they should die, the household would not be carried on as they are carrying it on; but it would not be destroyed. A man says, "Oh! let me compass sea and land, and bring home what my golden net would fain enclose; let me live till I can make my children as princes, warding off all care from them, and supplying them with the means of all culture and pleasure; let me live till things are consolidated, and then I can leave my household without anxiety for their welfare." But the Lord strikes down this man, and he dies in the midst of his plans, and unfaithful agents scatter, taking what they can lay their hands on, and executors take the rest, and his children are left, just as he was, to themselves, and to the providence of God. And they grow up energetic, industrious, careful and frugal, as they would not have done if they had been left to be pampered and slain by the dissolving power of an overplus of riches.

Besides, we are not as necessary as we think. The sun will come up to-morrow if you do die. The stars will shine if you are not here to see them. Summer will come if your plough lies still. The world is not made to turn on you as a pivot. You occupy a very small place. Your little will, and your little purposes, scarcely crease the great orb of affairs. And no man is so necessary that of the stones God cannot

raise up one to take his place. The work that you have in undivided hands, God scatters and divides up among a hundred.

So men over-estimate their importance, and think that death is a terrible thing because they are conceited in regard to their relations here in this world.

But the true significance of death lies in the fact that it brings men into final moral relations with God; that it brings moral character and conduct to a final test; that it brings men into judgment for all the deeds done in the body—for every word; for every thought; for every habit: for every element of character. At death men enter into the presence of God. There is a settling of their estate; and their estate follows their nature and character. They that have done good rise to honor and glory and immortality; and those that have done evil sink to shame and woe. That is a reason why men dread death; and it is a good reason for dreading it. But it is not a good reason for not thinking about it. It is not only a good reason why men should not love to cherish in their bosom the thought of death, which is so full of fear, but it is a good reason why they should take away fear from the thought of death. For, death may come to us either dark, revengeful, prophesying mischief, or it may come as the coming of the Son of Man, full of hope and promise and cheer.

Every consideration should induce men to give this point of their being the most profound thought; but it has, in fact, the least of our thought. Men do not willingly entertain thoughts of it, because it is painful, and they are not prepared to let that pain work in them a salutary result.

Now let us consider, as calm and prudent men, the full effect and the true character of deferring the preparation for death until the dying hour.

1. To thus defer this preparation is to deprive life itself of one of its chief steadying elements. There is nothing that we need more than ballasting. There is nothing that we need more than some form of earnestness which shall give cohesion and depth and power to the whole course of our lives. We tend to run after follies. We tend to be diverted from the highest good. We are tempted and dazzled by tripperies. And death is a solemn undertone which never dies out of the air.

They who live near the shore of the sea know that even in a calm the surge moans upon the beach. No wind comes, that the plash does not grow louder. And storms thunder on the shore. And those who live near the sea learn to miss, if they go away from it, the solemn undertone of the great singing, sighing ocean.

So death, to the contemplative mind, is, as it were, the great other

world beating on this. And the thought of it keeps in one's soul a sense of one's life—of its greatness, its reality, the consequences of it; and so it steadies men, and keeps them to their work, to their thought, to their conscience, and to their reason.

A wise foresight of death changes the emphasis of experience in this life. He who forethinks and prepares, will find that he has made wise provision not simply against the contingency of the future, but for the exigencies of the present. For the preparations for death, of which I shall speak more by and by, will relieve us from the threat of ten thousand cares and ills, and ten thousand dissipations. Just so soon as a man measures his history, or his experience, by infinite measures, how he puts to shame the common rules of society!

There is one solitary little proverb that gets a living among men, which is very good. When one frets over a small thing men are accustomed to say, "Well, it will be all the same a hundred years hence!" That is a sort of blind or homely way of coming at this same thing.

If men were accustomed to measure things by their value to them in their whole scope of being—and that it is to think of death in these ways—a thousand things which torment them would be found to be mere midges. Men think that they are stung to death when mosquitoes sting them, in moral things. Men vex and harrass and annoy themselves by mere dust. The vast things—those things that involve in them everlasting consequences—they do not feel. The emphasis is wrong. Men acuminate the things which are small and inconsequential; and they leave blunted and undiscovered things which are vast and terrible in their outworkings. So that if a man be living with a wise forethought of life, and the termination of life, he will not be so apt to be inflamed by ambition, as if he thought this life was everything. And wealth will not be so tempting to him. It will not be any less a power: it will be more a power, but a different one, working for a different part of his mind. Pleasure will not fly away because a man must needs die, but it will answer a different end to one who feels that he will ere long die. He who feels that death opens the gate to another and higher state of existence, will look upon all parts of life, not with indifference, but with a different emphasis, and with a different meaning.

A wise foresight of death also gives unity, consistence, and steady purpose to the whole of our life, now scattered into details, or gathered together like a sand-heap in which the particles are in juxtaposition, but not in union. He who thinks from day to day that death is but a hand-breadth; that death comes to terminate this life, and then begins the other, the eternal, and the real life, cannot but find, not only that it will

minister to wisdom and prudence, but that it will soften many hard places, and relieve many sharp sufferings.

If one thinks wisely of death, not only will it not be a fear and a terror, but it will be a guardian angel. There is no thought sweeter to those that believe in Christ, than the thought that He will bring them from the dead, even as He was raised from the dead. There is no thought in which, with more joy, men bathe their fevered brow, than the thought, "Ere long I shall die; I shall go forth from this struggle —from this strife of tongues: from this bitterness; from this injustice; from this partial life; from this unmanliness. It will be but a little while before I shall go forth and be at rest."

2. Living without conscious preparation for death is a risk which neither prudence nor self-respect should allow. Judging by any way that men treat themselves, it is not prudent to put to peril and risk all the tremendous issues of dying. No man would put his affections to such a risk. No man does. A man guards himself with a wise providence of the future. No man puts his affections as they are involved in the family to such peril. He is perpetually forethinking; working to provide against evils; making preparation to-day and this year for to-morrow and next year. And it is wise—so wise that it ought to apply to the whole of our existence, as well as to a part. No man should allow his interest, his ambition, his property, to go without wise foresight and preparation. And no man, certainly, should treat that which is unspeakably more precious—his own immortality—without any consideration of the future. He that will not suffer his house to go uninsured—should he suffer his Father's house in heaven to be in peril to him? He that would not suffer his taste, or his commonest affections, to go without being clothed and guarded with foresight and caution and fidelity—should he permit his whole nature to be launched upon the future without a thought or a preparation? Is that wise? Is it prudent?

Still more, there is a principle of self-respect involved in this matter. The more worthy one thinks himself to be, the less can he afford to leave death to hazards. If it be that death divides; if one living right goes into joy and glory, and one living wrong goes into shame and punishment; if death is the point of division between a man's nobler life and his disgraceful life, no man that has self-respect can afford to leave the chances of his future being to the hour of death. You cannot afford to throw yourself away; and the more you are naturally proud and self-respecting, the more profound is your moral consciousness worthy of your being, the less can you afford to put it in peril on the threshold of the other world. No man so much as he who thinks highly of himself, of his power, of his capacity, of his recipiency, can af-

ford to leave anything to chance in respect to that great, that rich, that infinite, that eternal world. No man can afford to go into the future life an enemy of God. No man who believes in himself here, can afford to be bankrupt there. No man can afford to be a beggar, no man can afford to be a vagabond, forever. No man can afford to be a culprit in the world to come. And no man has any right to leave his condition there to chance.

3. There is a view which will have weight with men who are just, and who are honestly seeking to guide themselves by principles of honor. It is the ignoring, the dishonoring of God's love, his will and his commands, all one's life, and then, at death, for fear, or for the sake of interest, rushing into a settlement. It is better to enter "so as by fire" than to perish; but where one has his life and his reason before him, it is a shame for him to enter the kingdom of heaven "so as by fire"—to escape, as it were, into the salvation of Jesus Christ.

We have no doubt as to this matter of honor between man and man. If you were at odds with a neighbor, and you were prosperous, and he was prosperous, and disaster overcame you, you would be ashamed, in the hour of your disaster and your weakness, to go to that neighbor and make up with him, because a great trouble had come upon you. You would be ashamed to do at such a time what you would not do in your prosperity and strength, for the sake of the benefit you might derive from it.

Or, put it in another form. A child is reprobate, and breaks away from home, and squanders all he can get, and becomes a wreck and a wretch, and apparently is to be disowned. He hears, at last, after years and years of dissipation, that his father is weakening and drawing near to death; and he scents the opportunity, and rushes home, and professes repentance and reformation, in order that his father may reconstruct his will, and leave him a part of his estate. What would you think of a child that should do that? What would you think of a child that should deliberately calculate upon it, and say in himself, "The old man has oftentimes, with tears in his eyes, warned me against my gambling companions; but there is time enough yet. He is rich, and I want a part of his money, and I know his heart, and I mean to come in for a share by-and-by. I am going to have my pleasure; I am going to eat, drink and be merry; I am going to have my royal debauch with my companions; and when I see that the old man is about *pegging out* I will go home and reform; because I do not mean to lose that property; I am going to enjoy myself as I please, and have that too?" What would you think of a child that should say that, and then keep his eye on his father, and calculate his chances, and run scuttling home just in time to get his name put in the will right,

in order that he might have the property? What name is there in any language that is adequate to express your feelings toward such baseness as that?

And yet, are there not in my hearing men that are living precisely so with respect to their Father who is in heaven? Are there not men here who are saying to themselves, "I am going to have the way of my pride, and my ambition, and my lust; I am going to live as I please; I am going to seek my own delights; but I cannot go out of life as I am; so by-and-by I am going to repent"? Oh! you mean pensioner! Oh! you detestable creature! Do you mean to suck all that is palatable to you out of God's summer, and make no acknowledgment to him for his bounty as long as you can help it? Do you deliberately calculate, "I will serve iniquity, I will dishonor love, I will forswear allegiance, I will use myself for myself, during the best part of my life—for God is good, and will not cut me down; and by-and-by I will, when I have some monition of approaching death, repent, and make a lucky turn; and slip into the kingdom. I will have all the good of this world, and all the good of the other world too!" Is that your calculation? Did you ever think whether you were living on principles of honor or not? Are you not living on principles that between man and man are so detestable that you would not look one in the face who should practice them toward his fellows? And how must angels look upon men who do not hesitate to do toward God that which they would be ashamed to do, and would scorn to do, toward each other? And yet, there is many and many a man who has calculated his whole life on that chance.

Young man, you have said, "For one, I am not going to be worried and fretted by this thing any longer. I am going to throw it behind my back. I have entered upon a business career; and I am going to run through that career. Religion would check me in my course: it would stand in the way of my doing what I mean to; and I will not trouble myself about it now. But by-and-by, when I have accomplished my objects in life, I am going to give attention to preparation for death." There is your horoscope. There are the principles on which you are living. And yet, if I charge you with total depravity, how your brow wrinkles! You have taken the noblest and best of all relations, and put them on principles so odious and hateful that a man cannot be tolerated who acts upon them in his dealings with his fellow men; and yet you expect to go out of this life and be happy in the other life! Be your own judge in this thing.

4. There are prudential considerations of a very solemn nature which one should employ. Those who think that they shall prepare for death in the last hour of life, ought to consider some of their chances.

As a matter of fact, more than one half that die in this world die without consciousness. Not alone of those that die by accident, by sudden stroke, but of those that die by disease, more than one half die under a cloud, so that they have no use of their reason. And among these are many who, all their life-long, said, "I am not prepared for death; I know that very well; but I hope to have timely notice, and I mean to prepare before I die." Hundreds, thousands, multitudes, have reserved to the last hours of life a preparation for death; and when those last hours came reason had gone, and they went out of life as men asleep, when the ship sinks, go out of life, drowned without a cry.

A large portion of the residue are by disease so far disabled, benumbed, relaxed, weakened, that it is quite in vain to attempt much instruction with them. One of the piteous things which a minister sees who is called to exhort the dying, is the calmness which they exhibit. I have been called to the bedsides of men whom I know to have been dissipated, and in no ordinary degree wicked, whose reason, though it remained, was, as it were, under a charm. I would talk with them, and they would admit everything. They saw everything. They felt nothing. Sensibility seemed to have died in its fountains, and they were like men who were in a dream. They saw the future; they believed in the future; they believed in God, in judgment, and in punishment; and they believed that they themselves were drifting right on to the shore, a wreck; and yet, it affected neither fear, nor hope, nor remorse. There was a perfect insensibility in them. And so they died. And of those that die with their reason, of those that die rational, I think it may be said that one half die with such a lowered tone of sensibility, with the nervous system so impaired, that they are utterly incapable of making any preparation for death. At the very best there be few who are capable of it.

And of the residue, how few are there who in that hour can, with any deliberation, with any discrimination, with any ready command of faith, with any clear apprehension of life, throw themselves into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ in any such way as to leave a reasonable and well-grounded hope to those who are left behind, that they have made a good exchange of worlds!

To be sure, there are some chances—chances enough to make it wise for every man to be exhorted. There is hope even in the eleventh hour. There is hope for some. And yet the hope is so slender that it seems to me he who is in life and health is infatuated who reserves his immortality to the miserable chances of a death-bed repentance. There is no standard which we employ in respect to our common affairs, there is no way of measuring prudence and honor, which does not sit in

condemnation upon those who reserve for the last hour all their preparation for the kingdom of God.

Whichever way you look at it, and the more you look at it; whether you accept the importance, the worth, of a man's own soul, or the claims of God, his rightful commands; whether you consider the effect of a timely preparation upon this life or on the issues of the other: whether you take into account the glory of the heavenly estate, or the misery of those who are lost—whichever way you look at it, no man can justify himself in the court either of his conscience or his reason, for letting alone a preparation for death until the last moment. And yet, that is just what every man is doing who, though he is living from day to day under self-condemnation, is doing nothing.

This subject ought to come very near to the young, because it will take away one of those fears and one of those distresses which are so incident to the young. How vividly I remember my boyhood. Oh, that old church bell! What woe it has smitten into my sensitive soul! Hearing that old bell toll for some one's death was enough to give me horrors for the day and for the week. How the thought of the other life, and of my want of preparation for it, brooded over me like a hideous dream in the night! And, at last, when I found who lived in the other life; when I found that it was my Saviour and my Friend; when I found that he had taught me how to love him, and that in his arms was salvation, and that death was slain and destroyed, and that I was saved in him, how it was as if one, being in a far frozen zone, had gone to the temperate zones, or the tropics! And for scores of years, dying has had no fear for me. It has long since ceased to have any banners of threat and warning in the sky for me. It is better to die than to live, for him who is prepared to die. If I wished to send a child of mine into the world equipped for the battle of life, and wished him the highest joy and the greatest peace, I would say to him, Clear the terror out of your future. See that you have a right to die with a crown on your head as a son of God, and not as a miscreant and a culprit. Prepare to meet thy God in youth. Trust him. Love him. It will take away fear from all your life, and make that life better worth having—more cheerful, more joyful.

Do not think that in order to prepare now for death, a man must sit, as it were, among tombstones. Do not think that I call you to a gloomy life. Do not think that I call you to meditation on funerals, and coffins, and graves, and skulls, and cross-bones, and hideous insignia of death. Do not think that I call you to sadness and sepulchral ghastliness. I do not call you to these things. I do not seek to fill your minds with terror; but to present death to you in such a light that it shall have no terror to you. Live by faith of God, give your

heart to Christ, take him to be your personal Saviour, yield, as a child, everything to him as a Father, and you will have no occasion to fear death. Death has no terror; no blackness; no memorials of evil; no threat. It is as sweet as flowers are. It is as blessed as bird-singing in spring is. I never hear of the death of any one who is ready to die, that my heart does not sing like a harp. I am sorry for those that are left behind, but not for those that have gone before.

It is always a sad day in autumn, to me, when I see the change that comes over nature. Along in August, the birds are all still, and you would think that there were not any left; but if you go out into the fields you find them feeding in the trees, and hedges, and everywhere. By-and-by September comes, and they begin to gather together in groups; and anybody that knows what it means knows that they are getting ready to go. And then come the later days of October—the sad, the sweet, the melancholy, the deep days of October. And the birds are less and less. And in November, high up, you see the sky streaked with water-fowl going southward; and strange noises in the night, of these pilgrims of the sky, they shall hear whose ears are attuned to natural history. Birds in flocks, one after another, wing their way to the south. Summer is gone; and I am left behind; but they are happy. And I think I can hear them singing in all those states clear down to the Gulf. They have found where the sun is never cold. With us are frosts, but not with the bird that has migrated.

Oh, mother! my heart breaks with your heart when your cradle is empty; but shall I call back the child? Nay; sooner pluck a star out of heaven than call back that child to this wintry blast. Shall I call back your young and dear and blooming friend? Nay. You are left in some bitterness for a time; but make not a man out of angel again. Let him rejoice.

In all our outlook, and in all our forelook, dying is triumphing. Not any bower of roses is so festooned in June. Not where the jessamine and honeysuckle twine, and lovers sit, is there so fair a sight, so sweet a prospect, as where a soul, in its early years, is flying away out of life, and out of time, through the gate of death—the rosy gate of death; the royal gate of death; the golden gate of death; the pearly gate of death.

It is guilt and fear that blacken dying. Hope and love make it sweeter than being born. And so the day of death is better than the day of birth; and it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. It is really so to those who know it, and put it to proof.

And to the young I say, If you would be happy, do not live with an unsettled account. It is the special boast of some men that they

are out of debt. They reflect upon it with unfeigned satisfaction. It is a source of great happiness to them. And you shall sometimes hear one man say to another, as it were in defiance, "Do I owe you anything, sir?" "I believe not," says the other. "No, sir, nor any other man, thank God! I own my house, and everything I have. I do not owe anybody, and nobody can hurt me." Then there are other men who at every corner they turn expect a hand to grab them. They owe, and cannot pay; and every day they go dodging about, and resort to various shifting devices, to avoid their creditors. And what sort of a life is that? Just such a life as hundreds and thousands of young men are living, who all the time feel that there is a gloom coming down on their joys. Because they know that they are not prepared to die, they are perpetually dreading the future.

Now for pleasure's sake—certainly for honor's sake and duty's sake, but even for pleasure's sake—it is wise that the young should prepare for death while they are yet young, and keep that preparation up all the way through life.

And if it be wise for them, certainly it is wise for those who are advancing in life—those whose days are numbered. There are a great many such before me. There are men here whose years make it right that I should call them my fathers, who have lived scores and scores of years, and who are to day witnesses against themselves, that they have never made any preparation for dying. They think they are honest, and, as the world goes, they are. They are industrious, they are frugal, they are straight as citizens, they are kind as householders, they have a great many virtues; but all of these virtues do not amount to a preparation to meet God, and to dwell with the spirits of just men made perfect. And they know it. They have been for forty years talking about the subject of religion, but they have not advanced one single step toward it; and they are living as far from preparation and from hope as they ever were. But time is dealing with them, and it cannot but be that in a few years the places that now know them will know them no more forever. I appeal to everyone who is going on in life, and who has been years and years thinking of this subject of life and death, whether it is not time for them to change, and change at once. Is there any command that comes home to you, in exhortation, with more affecting earnestness than that of our text?

There are some of you that God is dealing with. There are some of you that cannot rest. Your consciences are sore. Your fears are more faithful to you than you are to yourselves. There are some of you who are living in known sin. There are some of you who, if you could detach yourselves from certain courses, would have nothing to hinder your reconciliation with the Lord Jesus Christ. There are

many of you that are rolling sin as a sweet morsel under your tongue. But you are not happy in it. Is it not strange that men are not detached from their sins by the want of enjoyment? Many and many a man says, "I cannot give up my cup; and yet it makes me wretched." Many a man says, "I cannot give up my illicit life; and yet it is a torment to me all the time." There are those who knowingly give themselves up to dishonesties, impurities, and dissipations of various kinds. Death is coming on step by step. They are dragging themselves literally to the point of disaster. And they reluctate at times. Sometimes they weep, and sometimes they breathe prayers. Yet they do not change. And one after another will drop out of life like men that fall over a precipice so high that we do not hear the report. They will disappear; and friends coming back, will ask, "Where is A.?" and the reply will be, "Oh! he died and was buried twelve months ago." "Where is B.?" "He played out about six months ago." "Where is C.?" "He has taken up lodgings in Greenwood." So men, with these ghastly pleasantries, cover up all their fears, and that greatest event of life—going out of it. And there are men within the sound of my voice who are trembling now, and who know that, above everything else, they need that some hand should take them up, with irresistible power, and put their life where their moral sense is already, and do for them what they are too irresolute to do for themselves.

But the time is short; and if you are to do it for yourselves (as you must; for there is no hand but yours to do it) you need to be in a hurry. *Be ye ready!* To some of you, this, if it is not the last time, is among the last times, that you will enjoy the privileges of the sanctuary. The years are unmerciful, and are bearing you away, beyond preaching, and beyond the solicitude of the Gospel, toward God, and toward the inevitable doom of sin and sinners.

And so I say to you, Oh, my friends!—ye that are living in sin, Prepare to meet your God. He makes haste. The days are going. Watch; be sober; be ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

And so, as helpless as a child, I have drifted through this subject, and come to the end of it, and done nothing, to my own thought and seeming. I think there is no place where a man feels his helplessness so much as when he stands between two great worlds, and strives to deal with men. There is no fortress that is so inaccessible as the human heart. There is no place where a man feels his skill, his wit, his knowledge, his power, so baffled as when he stands in the presence of a living man, and attempts to lift him out of animalism, and out of sordid passions, and out of worldly moods, into a pure, serene and heav-

enly mood. I shall sooner stand and say to the flowers, "Come forth!" and see the flowers obey my call, than stand in the midst of such a deaf assembly as this, and say to the impure, "Come into purity!" to the hard, "Come into the sweetness of love;" to the suspicious, "Come into simplicity and trust," and to the worldly-minded, "Be ye heavenly-minded, and set your affections on things above, at the right hand of God, where Christ sitteth," and have them do my bidding.

All power is as nothing. Yet I yearn; I long, I strive; I pray As an ambassador in Christ's stead, I beseech you, be ye reconciled to God. To-day I say to the young, Death loves to riddle; and if you think you are in no danger of dying because you are young, I beseech you, make a pilgrimage to Greenwood, and read the ages. That is a lesson for any man to learn. Take the averages of those ages, and see whether men die young and in the prime of life or not.

I beseech of you (and there is nothing that carries your whole reason and judgment and conscience more than this) do not defer any longer a preparation for dying. It will be an evil hour if you repent on your death-bed. It may be with your reason clouded; it may be amidst tempestuous fears; it may be in an utter apathy. Prepare now; for the best preparation for dying is right living.

To you that are young, to you my fathers, and to you my own equals in age, I come bearing the message of your Master. Heaven waits for you. The joy of heaven may be yours. And all the disasters, all the terrors, of sin and guilt and shame, wait for those that do not turn from their wickedness to God, and witness for life. I stand between the flame and the crown, and cry out to you, *Prepare to meet your God!* For the day makes haste. Your time is short. Your work is great. Do not procrastinate any longer. Begin to-day, in prayer, and consecration, and simplicity, and earnestness, to live a Christian life. And God will be glad, and Christ will rejoice over you, and the Holy Ghost will help and sanctify you.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, that thou hast not clothed thyself with terror; that thou dost not fill the future with fear. We draw near to thee by Him who is called *Saviour, Friend, Redeemer;* and when we are taken by his hand and presented to thee we behold thy name. It is *Father*. We are taught to call thee by this endearing name. And what fear can come with thee? What dread can there be of thee? In thee is refuge and rescue to those that are outside of thee, tossed with fear and with dread. We take refuge as children in our Father's house. We run to thee in every time of fear, that we may be saved. And we rejoice. The more we put thee to proof and trust thee, the more dost thou reveal thyself in our experience, past all doubt, a faithful, covenant-keeping God. Every word of thy promise is Yea and Amen. We are helpless. None of us can do our duty in full. We are sinful, weak, imperfect, stumbling, erring every day and every moment. And all are pensioners of love. It is not to measure out our desert that thou dost give. It is not that we are worthy. It is that thou art generous. It is because thou art that nature of love which delights to give to the unworthy, and by giving make them worthy. Thou dost fill up our deficiency with thy goodness, and bring us very near to thee, because it pleases thee to do these things. This is the royalty of thy heart. Here dost thou love to sit with justice to defend; to love: to draw all thine unto thyself. And when thou dost draw thy sword and smite thine enemies, it is that, being wounded, they may be made whole; that, being slain, they may be brought to life again with a more glorious life. Thou dost seek to subdue thine adversaries by thy grace and by thy mercy; and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. Forbid that we should overthrow all the purposes of thy goodness, and treasure up for ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and call down upon our heads God's righteous retribution against the wicked. Forbid that our selfishness should refuse thy bounty; that our obstinacy should resist thy sweet persuasion; and that our sordid and secular minds should be unconscious of all that precious treasure which thou dost offer to our faith. O thou that dost bring forth summer out of winter, bring forth, we pray thee, out of our cold and hard hearts the pleasant fruits of righteousness. And grant that the word of truth which shall be spoken to-day, may be spoken with seriousness and earnestness, with simplicity and directness; and grant that the Spirit of God may bear it home to every soul that shall need its special lesson.

Are there those in thy presence that have come up hither burdened in heart? O thou that didst command the morning to come forth from the night again! shine upon the most dark and troubled souls. May they find their way to thee, and, bearing tears, come away with songs. Are there those that are heavily laden? O, may they hear thee saying, Come to me and find rest to your souls. Are there those that have dispersed themselves in their wild and natural liberty? May they hear God calling them and saying, Take my yoke upon you. Grant, we pray thee, that there may be many who shall look from their trouble to that great joy and peace which thou hast for all troubled souls. Are there any that are thinking of their way, and are dissatisfied with the past, and anxious for the future, and yet dare to hope? Reveal to them this day the pleasant face of Jesus reconciled to them in love, if they are loving and reconciled. And may they hear their Father and their God offering to them full and free forgiveness. Whatever may have been their sins, how long soever they may have been sinning, thy heart is ample enough for full forgiveness to every one. The very chief of sinners may come to thee and live.

Grant, we pray thee, that those who are beginning with feeble steps to tread the royal way, may have the stumbling-blocks taken out of their path. May they find that they are growing stronger. More and more may the light dawn as they travel on toward the celestial gate. May none of them cast away their hope. May none of them count themselves unworthy of eternal life, and go back. May every one press forward toward the Sacred Heart.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that those who labor in holy things may be themselves quickened; that they may be filled more with the Spirit of their Father in heaven.

Oh! grant a blessing to rest upon all the young in this congregation, and those gathered in our Sabbath schools, and in our Bible classes. Sanctify those that teach; and may those that are taught be brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls.

We beseech thee that all the influences that go forth from this Church and its various operations, may be to the honor and glory of God. May we be saved from pride and from vanity and from self-indulgence. May we be saved from adulation, and from everything that shall tarnish simplicity and humility and purity and childlikeness before God our Father. Grant that thy people here may be bold to rebuke and to resist iniquity. May they be gentle, and kind, and easy to be entreated by those who are in need. And we pray that more and more bound together by love among themselves, and more and more filled and refilled from the fountain thereof in God, they may walk toward the celestial city, singing as they go, and triumphing ere they meet their foe, and passing as conquerors, crowned and laureled, through death itself; and that they may appear in Zion and before God.

We beseech of thee, that thou wilt bless us all and that thou wilt bless to us all the dispensations of thy providence. Thou art taking one and another out of our midst. Thou art calling home many from among us. We thank thee for their life, for their victory, for all our faith and gladness for their joy above. How precious are they making the heavens! How many stars now that once we saw not are shining out! How many are there of memories! How many are there of associations! How many are there of blessed chords of love that draw our hearts thither! How shall we realize that great future in which once no man dwelt to us, but which is now made populous! It is the city of our God, and our city. And forth there will come how many, from the gates to greet us—some whom we have helped; some whom we have borne and taught, and now are teaching us to fight our way to them, and so our way to heaven! Grant, O Lord! that this heavenly land may be brought very near to us to-day. May we rejoice in its joys. May its overflow come down as the rains from the clouds upon us. May our affections spring up as the flowers after the dew. And may our hearts be glad, looking heavenward to-day, in its promises, and in our holy hopes and expectations.

And grant, we pray thee, that thy blessing may rest upon the Churches that are gathered together to-day everywhere, and upon those that shall preach thy gospel. May every one have more and more light. Increase to-day more and more earnestness and fidelity. And make the knowledge of Jesus Christ to spread abroad. And make the power of his name to be felt, so that justice shall grow stronger; so that there shall be more intelligence and less ignorance; so that men shall grow humane and kind, one to another; so that civilization shall be full of Christ; and so that all this nation, and all the nations of the earth shall at last see thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word which has been spoken, to the consideration of every one. Help dying souls. Help the children that have no parents to pray for them. Help the young that have drifted away from the restraints and guardianship of home. Help those that are in the midst of life, and fixed fast in habits which they know not how to break. Help the advanced who are beginning to feel the infirmities of age. Oh! grant that every pain may be as the voice of a prophet saying to them, *Prepare!* Grant that every sign of weakness may say to them, *Prepare!* May they see messengers, one and another, all the way along the road which they travel, growing thicker every day, and more loud-voiced, saying to them, Be ready! Prepare to meet thy God! Lord Jesus, we pray that thou wilt answer the prayers that long have been delayed, and bring in at last the reluctant. Win them and wear them in thine everlasting glory. And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

FIDELITY TO CONVICTION.

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."—JOHN IX. 35—38.

This is the very affecting close of one of the most remarkable and dramatic passages of the history of our Lord which have been recorded. It was recorded by John. Almost every instance of the Master's experience which involves insight, which requires a sense of what is going on in men's thoughts and feelings, will be found more fully recorded by John than by the other Evangelists.

It seems that a blind man, well-known in the vicinity of Jerusalem, who had been blind from birth, sat begging, and that the Master, having compassion upon him, healed him of his blindness. The circumstances were so striking, the case was so public, and it happened so to strike the imagination of the people, and to lead them to infer the superior authority of Christ, that it produced a tremendous excitement. It was one of those little things which, happening to strike right, produced very disproportionate results from what one would have expected.

There were numbers of blind men healed by the Saviour; many lepers; many palsied; many afflicted with fevers and dropsies. His life was almost a continuous miracle of mercy. On many days it was impossible to instance the healings which he performed. And yet, no great excitement followed, except that of general wonder. There was no conflict under ordinary circumstances. But it was different in this case. On this occasion a very great conflict arose.

As soon as the man was healed (for Christ made a salve of spittle and clay, and anointed his eyes, and told him to go to the pool of Siloam, that was but a little distance from the temple, near which, doubtless, he sat—though that fact is not expressly stated—to wash; and he went and washed, and returned seeing)—as soon as he was healed, and came back, a buzz went through the whole neighborhood. For everybody knew this man. He was a landmark.

SUNDAY EVENING, March 6, 1870. LESSON: PSA. CIII. 1—18. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1278, 1291, 1336.

"The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others [very cautious folks] said, He is like him; but he said, I *am* he."

The man did not like to lose his personal identity just because he had got his sight. It is not very flattering to a man's self-love to go back among his neighbors and have folks doubting who he is, and what he is.

"Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not."

You see perfect simplicity here. He was as child-like as a man could be. And this great miracle had been wrought upon him, not on account of any worth that was in him; not because he was knowledgeable; not because he had any relation to the kingdom of Christ. He was not eminent in station. He had no influence; he had no property; he had nothing except misery. And that was the whole and sole reason why this great miracle of God was performed upon him—his misery. That is reason enough in the sight of God. That a man is sinful, is a reason why he should have forgiveness. That a man is an enemy of God, is a reason why he should be accepted by love and educated to virtue. That a man is wandering far away, is a reason why he should be sought after and brought back. God measures his mercies by our need, and by his own generosity.

"They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind."

They went to the Pharisees just as now men go to the minister with questions which they cannot answer themselves. And there was no impropriety in it, in such an instance as that. "Every man to his trade," it is said. If my watch is out of order, I never attempt to put it in order myself, but take it to the watch-maker. If my clothes need repairing I take them to the clothes-repairer. If I have a law question to be solved, I go to the lawyer. If I am sick, I go to the physician. And so it is in every sphere of life. If, therefore, one has casuistical questions, ethical doubts, it is proper for him to go to those who make these things their study. And the Jewish people went to the Pharisees.

Who were the Pharisees? They were the men who represented the patriotic purity of their times. They were the men who felt the burden of standing up for Palestine, as against foreign invaders. Not only that, they were the men who stood up for the old worship—not for the old theology; but for the old *worship*. They, therefore, addressed themselves in many ways to the pride and the self-love of the Jewish nation. Externally, there was very much about the sect of the Pharisees which was winning and commendable. There is no question but that on a very low plane they acted according to their sense of

duty. They loved their own people, and they loved their own hereditary institutions and worship; and they were willing, not only to be witnesses for them, but to suffer something for the maintenance of them. But, judged upon a higher plane, and by a spiritual law of truth, they were very proud, they were very selfish, and they never learned how to maintain the truth so as at the same time to make it invariably humane, merciful, sympathetic. Of this they were ignorant; and they were constantly stumbling into morality; and were constantly using their orthodoxy as a screw by which to crush somebody, or something. This set the Master very vehemently against them. They were men to whom the theory of truth was more precious than the people to whom the truth was sent. They were men to whom Judaism was more precious than the Jews. They were men who loved their party, and who, for the sake of their party, would give up everything that the party was good for—namely, the benefits which it could give to poor, suffering humanity.

Such were the Pharisees; and to them, as the teachers and authoritative expounders of whatever was peculiar to the Jewish economy, the people brought this man, that they might solve the difficulty. For they brought him, evidently, not because it was a kind thing that had been done, but because they did not know what to make of it.

There must have been something more than is stated in this narrative. We judge it by the shadow which it casts. It evidently existed in the minds of the people. We see it in the fact of their bringing him to the Pharisees, not only, but in the peculiar state of mind in which the Pharisees met the question. It is very plain that the working of this miracle had produced a very powerful impression in favor of the divinity of Christ himself, as an antagonistic force to the Pharisees; for they were thrown instantly upon self defence.

Therefore, the crowd, that had this kind of vague influence exerted upon them, went to the Pharisees to see what they thought about this man—as much as to say, "Here is a man who has healed one that was born blind; and is not this the Son of God? Is not this the promised Messiah?" Evidently that was the lurking feeling, the motive, which led them to go to the Pharisees. They wanted to see what the Pharisees had to say about it.

"It was the Sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also [as the citizens had done] asked him [the man] how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see."

It was not necessary, in the state of feeling, in the temper, which existed among the Parisees, to come any nearer than that. Already Jesus had made his presence fill the whole land. He was in everybody's thoughts. Therefore, when the man said "he," it must have

been Jesus that was meant, as there was but One who could be designated by that term.

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, this man is not of God."

Why! that is a queer inference. Here was a man that found a poor wretch who lived by begging; who, being deprived of the means of going about and helping himself, was an object of universal compassion and charity. Here was a man that was a stranger to this poor creature; that had perhaps never seen him before; that held no relation of kinship to him; and that, for no earthly reason but that of general compassion, had healed him. And the man was rejoicing in their midst with full eyesight. One would think that everybody would have said, "Whoever you are, you have done a divine thing." But when this man was brought, and he testified that Jesus had restored his sight, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not of God." Why? Was not that a divine beneficence? Was not that a thing worthy of God? To raise a suffering creature out of his darkness and into light and joy—is not that divine? Oh! hear them:

"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day."

What is the sabbath-day? It is a conventional arrangement. It is a mere artificial custom. It is a very good thing; but it is a part of the world's harness. It is a mere servant of man. As Christ said, on another occasion, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." And here, in the place of this miracle, of this wondrous humanity and mercy, there were Pharisees found who stroked their beard, and looked upon the man with stern eye, and said, "He is not of God; for he does not keep the Sabbath!"

There are men who are utterly dead to all moral sensibility, but quick, jealous, in regard to any church arrangement—anything that a priest has charge of; anything that the ecclesiastical authorities have authority over. Not to keep an hour, not to read a lesson, not to put a bow or a garment on just right—that is a sin; but to wound a fellow man, or to neglect to relieve a fellow man who is in trouble, is a matter of very little consequence! To do a kindness to a creature that is suffering is well enough in its way; but under these circumstances it was not "orthodox," and so was to be condemned!

Here is a case that looks very hateful when we see it as having occurred two thousand years ago, in a Pharisee; and it ought to look just as hateful to-day when you see it in yourselves. A great fundamental humanity ought to stand higher in every man's regard than any philosophy, than any observance of days, than any ecclesiastical arrangement, or than any civil law.

But the Pharisees were not all so fierce as that. There were some good men among them. Because, when this thing was propounded as the theory,

"Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."

They resort, then, to the man, once more, and give another turn to the screw.

"They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet."

He understood the question to be, What further was the impression that you derived? And he, in his simplicity (for he was good tempered yet) said, "He is a prophet."

That was all he knew about it. That was a real Jewish answer. Anybody that was on a higher level; anybody that was, for instance, a teacher, and a good man, was supposed, in some way or other, to be a prophet.

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight."

What was the matter? Why did not they believe it? It was a plain case. There was no doubt about it. What was there that hindered their believing it? It was a latent sense, an inward perception, that if they admitted this miracle, it was going to damage their sectarian interest. That was the trouble with them.

Now see to what ingenuity, to what twistings, to what contortions, to what moral obliquities, this secret, silent, organized social selfishness will lead men.

"They called the parents of him that had received his sight."

Now we shall have a pretty scene. Of course parents love their children; and any favor done to their children will swell their hearts with gratitude even more than if it were done to themselves. He that blesses my child, twice blesses me. He that blesses my child—let whoever will speak against him, or persecute him—I am his friend, and I will stand up for him, and he shall never want a defender as long as my heart beats. And every true parent feels so. Every generous nature feels that a kindness done to a friend is more than a kindness done to himself. So we shall see a spectacle of real, enthusiastic parental gratitude—*perhaps!*

"They asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?"

Rather a chilling question.

"His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him; he shall speak for himself."

Oh! the cowards! The mean-spirited sneaks! See how they dodged; and that, too, right in the face of this royal benefaction.

Now, is not that human nature, after all? Do we not still see just such cowards—men that are afraid—men in whom there is no honor and no love to hold them up so that they will face anything that is dangerous to them?

What was the matter with these parents? Why were they afraid to speak out their honest thoughts? For they believed, just as much as the man himself, not only that he was born blind, but that Jesus had healed him. What was the matter? I will tell you what it was.

"These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."

Now, there is an argument for you. The Jews had set that up as a threat and a terror; and these poor cowardly parents stood shuddering under the shadow of it, and did not dare call, I will not say their soul, but their *son*, their own. Yes, they believed he was their son; they were sure about that; but as to who healed him they were not so sure. So to get rid of the consequences of answering this question, they tucked it off on to their son, saying, "Ask him."

What a mean, beggarly spirit! I want you to despise it soundly; for by-and-by you will have to see the same thing in yourselves; and it is well for you to be prepared. I want you should be ashamed of being afraid to stand to up for your principles and for your affections.

"Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him."

Well, the case had not gone very well so far! The Pharisees evidently were not suited. They had made no impression on the popular mind. They had not secured anything that was defensory on their part. Here was this damaging miracle that was threatening to produce a popular impression in favor of the Messiahship of Jesus; and they could not make head against it.

"Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him [how devout people will be when they have a purpose for it!], Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner."

That settled it, then! If this man had been accustomed to receive his notions from authority, instead of using the judgment and conscience which God gave him, that would have been the end of the matter, and there probably would never have been any account of this history. But, though this man did not set out to be a hero, see how beautiful he made fidelity to one's convictions to appear.

"He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Oh! that hateful fact! That was just the thing that they wanted to suppress; and here the man blurted it out again—*I was blind, and born blind, and I see, and that man gave me my sight: make the best of it.* That did not content them.

"Then they said to him again, what did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?"

The man's patience rather failed him. There was something too insulting in their way.

"He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him."

Of course they did. That is the usual way in a discussion of this kind. They had got into the marrow of the argument now.

"They said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

It was as if he had said, What is the use of having spiritual teachers that do not know as much as that? And that rather went against them.

"Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was *born* blind. If this man were not of God he could do nothing."

Brave fellow! How well he stood up for his benefactor! What a sermon he preached!—and he never was ordained, either.

Now it is their turn. And their discourse is now divided into two parts—first, theoretic; and second, practical. The theoretic was this:

"Thou wast altogether born in sins; and dost thou teach us?"

That was blasphemy against the Pharisees.

The practical part was:

"And they cast him out."

Here is a sermon with two heads—the theory and the practice.

It is at this stage that the passage which I have selected for our text comes in. The whole thing had passed. A man sat begging, thoughtless of any mercy—perhaps expecting a dole of a penny; but instead of that he received his sight. It was the greatest gift that he could have received. For, he that has been blind, and that receives his sight, receives the sun, the moon, and the stars. He receives the day and the night. He receives all things that grow. He receives all things that are beautiful. And the face of father and mother, the face of wife and child, the face of all fair things on the globe, go with the gift of sight. It is the simple putting of the divine finger upon the eye. And with the opening of the eye comes all the glory of the heavens and of the earth. And he that reached out his hand for a penny, received the whole world, in being healed.

And then came the tumult among the people; the questionings among the neighbors; the controversy between him and the Sanhedrim; and the excommunication. And when a man was excommunicated, he might as well have been dead. For all social connection with him was broken. No man might entertain him, nor even speak to him, if it was the *greater* excommunication. On him the whole public sentiment concentered, and he was a cast-away. Nobody dared to say that he was his friend. Nobody dared to speak for him. Nobody dared to take him by the hand. Nobody dared to take him into his house, or to give him employment. For there was that same authority that

had excommunicated him, threatening to excommunicate any that should befriend him. Therefore he was damned, so far as ecclesiastical authority could damn him.

Our Saviour meant to do this man a great kindness; but see what a great disaster he brought upon him. The man might very well have said, "What to me is this eyesight? It comes too late. I can learn no trade. I own no land. I can no longer beg. I have lost my country. I have lost my religion. I have lost my friends. I am a miserable outcast. I might better be a leper, and have men pity me and show mercy to me, than be a well man, with restored eyesight, and have nothing but starvation." He might very well have said this in his loneliness. I do not know that he had a single one of these thoughts. I believe he did not think anything of the sort. For he seems to have been made of sterling good stuff. He seems to have been an honest, straightforward, courageous nature.

It was at this dark period of his history that the Master sought him —for that he did seek him there can be no doubt. He did not leave nor forsake him when he had taken the first step toward ameliorating his condition. He followed him with his sympathy. And it seems that when he heard that he had come to grief, he went and hunted him up.

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him [that unquestionably conveys the idea of continuous searching, and suspended action,] he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

Contrast this man, and his simple, quiet heroism, with the proudest of all those whose history has gone in review before us. How much nobler he was than the professional teachers of morality! How much nobler he was than his own parents! And his nobility all sprung, not from the fact that he was wise, that he had knowledge, or that he had done any extraordinary thing. He was knowledgeable but to a very limited extent; and he could not boast of any great achievements. But he stood by the light which he had. He did not wait for more. He acted according to the full light that he possessed—which is more than many of you do. You want to wait till all doubts are solved; till you can see through doctrines, in every direction, to the utmost bound; till you have made investigation into creeds, and into churches, and into services, and into ceremonies. Very few men are willing to trust the simple light and testimony of their own consciences. But this man, without waiting to know what further there was in truth, when it was called in question, stood up, at peril and risk, for it, according to the light which he had. He was not ashamed of his Benefactor, as many men are, who know that all that they have is by the grace of God, and yet

are ashamed of God. He was not ashamed of the name of him who had healed his eyesight. On the contrary, he bore witness of that name when it cost him all that life was worth to him. Though he was cast out for the witness he bore, he still remained faithful.

But notice, that a man who suffers for doing what is right, is never so near to God as when he seems to be furthest from him. This man might have said, "Oh! why did he come near me, at any rate? Why did he get me into this peril and difficulty? He had better left me alone." I do not believe he ever thought of it. I believe the nature of the man was such as to lead him to say, "I had better be a whole man, in the possession of my senses, if I do starve, than to sit there a miserable cripple-eyed beggar." He loved full manhood, and large manhood, and sat there, doubtless, thinking, wondering and waiting; and the Saviour was hunting him up; was looking for him; was following him.

Is there any man here who has taken one single step in the direction of duty, and seems to have got into difficulty by it? There are a great many people who do that. I know men who undertake to make crooked things straight in money-matters; and it seems as though they only made their case worse. I know men who are living in defiance of the laws of morality; and the light dawns on their minds, and they begin to act according to their secret consciousness of right and wrong, and they seem to themselves to get into a worse place than they were ever in before. I know men who set their moral sense against the domination of their passions; and it seems as though they only made their passions tyrannical. Never was it so hard for them to refrain from profanity, never was it so hard for them to speak the truth, never was it so hard for them to keep their temper, never was it so hard for them to rein in their imperious appetites and passions, as when they undertake to do right. The first steps seem to themselves only to sink them deeper. They begin to see; but they are cast out of sympathy; they are cast away from help, apparently.

No! Never has a man undertaken one step in the right direction, and begun to suffer for it, that Christ did not look after him. You may not see him; he may not be visible to you just yet; but he is on your track. He will find you. Do not murmur, do not repine, that you have taken one step. Do not be sorry that you have begun to see. You ought to have seen long ago.

Oh, drunkard! oh, lustful man! oh, illicit lover of pleasure! oh, dishonest man! oh, incipient swindler! oh, perverter of the young! are you beginning to see? And does it seem to you as though the darkness thickened around about you, and as though the difficulties were more than you ever before knew them to be? Do not be dis-

couraged nor faithless. The Christ that has led you so far is not going to abandon you. He stands by your side already. So far you have gone in your own strength; and now comes Jesus to you, who has opened your eyes, and says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" You must go up from transgression to morality; and you must go from morality a step higher, into faith.

And no man who has been whelmed in wickedness, and means to extricate himself from it, can do it by the mere force of his own resolution, or by his own volition. A man must have power to take the first step toward his own reformation; and having taken that first step, he must take the second.

Now Christ stands, to-night, by the side of every man who has taken one step, and says, "Will you take hold of the hand of the living God?" And are you not willing to take the simple step which this man took?

"He said, who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe."

How straight to the mark this man's thoughts flew! How true his purposes were! There was an essential nobility in him. He was a hero, in a small way—an obscure hero.

"And he worshipped him.'

I would rather have been that man than to have been the high-priest. I would rather have been that man than to have been Herod, or any of his Court. I would rather have been that man than to have been Cæsar, who was reigning at Rome. There was not a man with a crowned head or with a sceptered hand; there was not a man deep in treasure, nor a poet, nor an orator, seeking and winning praise, in all the earth, who, after all, had the stature of this ignorant, simple-minded man, who was true to the light he had, who found Christ, and knew when he found him, and who, with the simplicity of a child that when the mother opens her arms, runs to her bosom, and clasps its hands about her neck, ran to Christ, when he was revealed to him, and threw his arms about him, and loved him, and was saved.

Ages have gone past; the darkness of revolution has whelmed the earth; but still rising above the gloom of the distant past is the light of this simple example of fidelity, of willingness to know Christ, of willingness to believe, and of willingness to worship.

I draw near to every man who is periled for the sake of the truth, to-night, and say, Do not be afraid of being cast out. No matter if your church does disown you; the Lord Jesus Christ is mightier than any church. No matter if your neighbors do desert you; the Lord Jesus Christ is more to you than all the men in any neighborhood or community could be. No matter if your parents foreswear you; the

Lord Jesus Christ is better to you than parents. No matter if your own selves seem to sink in solitariness and in darkness; the Lord Jesus Christ is yours, and he offers not simply to continue his past mercies to you, but to take you by the hand, and lead you on to higher and nobler experiences. Will you accept that Saviour who draws near to you to-night?

Oh! there are present those that I know, and there are here still more that I do not know personally, to whom my words are as piercing as a sword. There are consciences that rise up to the touch of these truths. There is a consciousness in many and many a heart that fairly quivers as I speak. There are persons within the sound of my voice who do know that their eyes have been opened; and who know the state that they are in; and by their side stands the Lord Jesus Christ, though they may not, for the moment, know that it is he. Their very trouble is Jesus. That which they call darkness is the very shadow of God which falls upon them. And the voice of God comes to them, to-night, and says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the salvation of your soul."

Will you believe? Will you look up, and say, "Lord, I believe," and worship? Do that, and upon you shall rise the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But if you turn away from Him that speaketh; if in this solemn hour of your experience, when you have been brought to the very point of rectitude, to the very point of reformation, to the very point of conversion—if now you turn back, you put Christ to an open shame by your continual and habitual refusal; and upon you must rest forever and forever the consequence of this refusal.

Think better of it, and make this night the night of your emancipation. Throw away, to-night, all the hindrances and all the obstacles that are about you, and register, as your vow, HENCEFORTH I AM THE LORD'S.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We come, O blessed Saviour! in the familiar way of our own experience—the way that thought has trod, the way of the angels' flight, the way of sorrow, and the way of joy. For in joy and in sorrow we have prayed unto thee. Angels have borne petitions and brought back answers of mercy. And thou thyself didst pray, in the mountain, and at midnight, and often, with thy disciples, and hast taught us to pray. And our own hearts have sought to ease themselves in trouble by prayer. We have through prayer made known our gladness and our gratitude in joys that lighted our world-face. And we have found rest from the tongues of men, from the fears of fortune, from the importunities of our own passions, from all that can harass and vex, in the silence and solitude of our closet. There thou hast revealed thyself. There thou hast made us to be the sons of peace. The witness of the Spirit hath been given us that we are the children of God: that we are of the household of faith. And thou hast made it sweet to pray. Nor can we refrain from praying, always and everywhere, our very thoughts moving as in choral gladness in the recognition of thy daily presence and of thy daily power and mercies.

We thank thee, O Lord, that though thou art not visible, thou dost communicate with us, by thy presence, so that we know that thou art. Thou dost speak inwardly to us, not as to the body by the lip, but by the Spirit to the spirit. And we know that thou art near in love to refresh, to cheer, to encourage hope, to rebuke sin. We love thy fidelity. We are glad for thy wholesome strokes. We do not desire a Leader that would permit us to wander; a Teacher that would not correct; a Parent that would not chastise. We thank thee for that fidelity which brings pain, and with pain healing.

Grant, we pray thee, that we still may have that same care. Thou hast never forsaken us, nor ceased to be faithful. We desire still the ministration of pain, burdens, yokes, crosses, the rod, thorns, whatever is best. What didst not thou bear for us? Shalt thou suffer for the sins of the world, and we not suffer for our own sins? Is the disciple better than the Master?

Oh! may we rebuke that spirit within us which goes forth every day murmuring, and wondering why we are dealt with as we are. Give us a more wholesome and manly disposition, that we may rejoice to suffer with Christ, and to make up in our body that which was lacking in his suffering. Grant that we may rejoice to be called the disciples of him who is the crowned Sufferer. And we pray that thou wilt grant that through suffering we may come to faith, and patience, and stability.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt accept our thanksgiving for all past mercies, and our ardent desires for mercies in days to come. Lead us safely through this life, amidst its care, its toil, its danger, its piercing temptations, its business pleasures, its dissipations, and its allurements thereby. Oh! let us have thy sure guidance. Give to us that inward joy which they have who know that Christ is the Captain, that he leads, that he will defend, and that he will bring victory.

Grant, we pray thee, that thy blessing may rest upon the services of this evening; upon the exposition of thy word; upon our service of devotion; upon our thought and meditation. And grant that all the blessing of the Sabbath-day may not expend itself upon this day. May the food which we have received serve us to go many days down through the wilderness. May we carry our joys out of the sanctuary, that they may sing to us in the desolate places of the world. May we comfort one another with truths as pilgrims that walk by the way. And so may we cheer and strengthen each other's hands. Thus may we go on until at last we all meet in the heavenly land, to recount our toils, and rejoice in our victory.

And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

THE ORIGINAL

PLYMOUTH PULPIT

SERMONS OF

HENRY WARD BEECHER

In Plymouth Church, Brooklyn

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BORROWING TROUBLE.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—MATT. VI. 34.

From the nineteenth verse of this chapter to the thirty-fourth, we may find the theory of life as laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ. Every philosophy proposes to itself, or seeks, some such schedule or scheme of living; and every man has some idea of what is the way of happiness. Not only every philosophy, but every religion has it. Here we find the secular side of life, the earthly life, the chart for living in this world, contained between the nineteenth and the thirty-fourth verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

"Do not live," says the Master, "for external things. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. After all these things do the gentiles seek—what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed; but let not my disciple, who accepts my ideal of life, and means to be happy according to the pattern that I shall lay down, make external and sensuous enjoyment the end and aim of his life."

It is not taught here that we are to pay no attention to external things. It is not a doctrine that lays the axe at the root of enterprise, or of commerce, or of secular industries. It does not say, "Be not engaged in any of these things." Men must needs be occupied with these things. But we are told, "Do not make these the things *for* which you live: make them the things *by* which you live."

If I go to see a brother, long absent, who has just landed in Boston, I go by the cars. I use them as a means of conveying me there. It is not merely for the sake of the car ride that I go to Boston. The cars become instruments of convenience to me. My heart goes for a purpose disconnected from them. I am thankful for this mode of conveyance; but it is the means, and not the end.

And our Master says, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven—incorruptible treasures. Do not lay up evanescent, earthly treasures, but the abiding treasures of the heavenly state."

SUNDAY MORNING, March 13, 1870. LESSON: MAT. VI. 9—34. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 714, 688, 619.

It is not a stroke at riches. It is not undervaluing worldly good, in its own place. It is substantially saying, "You are not beasts, that are born into life, and live only in this world; and therefore you ought to lay the foundation here for enjoyment in the future life. You are really children of God. You are to have a life so long, so noble, and so above all that is in the brute creation, that you should live for that other, interior and higher life, and not for the lower one. Make the higher life and the nobler development the aim; and make this secondary and secular life the mere instrument by which you attain that."

Here, then, is the grand aim. While the great mass of mankind live through the senses for the senses, and in the present for the present, exclusively, Christ says, "Do you live for the higher, the spiritual, and the eternal life. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness—seek ye *first* in the order of time, and *first* in intensity, the kingdom of God and his righteousness—and all these things shall be added unto you."

In this there is a profound philosophy. For that training by which a man *seeks first the kingdom of God*, is just the training which makes him, in the economic world, the most efficient, and the most sure of success. The less follows the greater.

Then he teaches us, as is already implied in the very statement which I have made, that the real treasure of this life is to be moral and social quality. That is to say, we are to seek our happiness, not by the things which we have around about us, but by what we have in us. It is what we *are* that is to make us happy, and not what we *have*.

I have seen Cremona violins, dusty, brown, black, split and splintered in fifty places, mended again and again, and as homely to the eye as anything can possibly be, and yet worth a thousand dollars apiece—not on account of what they are to look at, but on account of the capacity which they have of producing extraordinary musical sounds. It is their intrinsic quality of tone that makes them so valuable. And I have seen violins edged with silver, inlaid with gold, and covered all over with mother of pearl, and perfectly gorgeous to a baby's eyes, that had no quality or capacity for producing musical sounds, and that were well nigh worthless.

I have seen persons who have attempted to be happy by overlaying themselves with exterior adornments and pleasures, and who were like a violin without music in it, but with splendid stuff on the outside of it.

And so the genius of the Christian scheme says to every man, "Your happiness is to come from the essential quality of your nature, and not from what you put on yourselves." You may cover yourselves with pearls and jewels, you may heap up around about you silver and gold;

but you cannot be happy with these things if you have not the capacity of being happy in yourself. Happiness comes from the concords of a man's own nature, and not from outward circumstances. When a man is prepared to be happy, outward circumstances help him. Of course they furnish the material or occasion of his happiness; but the prime condition—that without which all other things fail—is that the dispositions in the man shall be set so that he shall be capable of being made happy.

I have thus said expansively that which is said in the most condensed, apothegmatic form in the New Testament—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness." "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"—not perishable things of this world, but higher qualities, Christian graces, inward experiences and dispositions, which in their very nature are joy bearing here, and are immortal there. Let such be the end and aim of your life."

This mode of teaching is the more striking to us because the modern spirit, and the American spirit before all others, is the spirit of forelooking enterprise, and is restless, and insatiable, and indomitable, and for the most part sensuous and external. You could not rebuke the whole temper and spirit of the times more than by the exposition of this scheme of happy living, as propounded in the gospel. Every man feels, in the very air, as it were, the impulse to build himself up into a power in life. Every boy is born *to be somebody*, in this country. His parents, among their first inculcations, instil this into him. "It is vulgar," they say, "to stay where you start." Everybody has a chance for everything, we are told. And it has become hackneyed, that every man's son may be President, or Chief Justice, or something else. Everybody has the liberty to do everything, it is said. And therefore everybody is a whirling and a whizzing from the very cradle after everything. There is nothing that is looked upon more contemptuously in this country than content. There is no man that commands so little respect as the man that is contented with his condition. You shall hear it said of a man, "He was born of poor parents, he has been poor all his life, he is going to be poor the rest of his days, he knows it, and he does not care. He has no spirit. To be sure, he sings all the time, and is happy all the time; but then, he is *nobody*. There is nowhere that the modern spirit is more shown in contrast with the truly Christian spirit, than in this land of life, and enterprise, and fever, and restless industry, where every man is pressing forward. And although theoretically we are all orthodox, although we are all right with the creed, we are wrong somewhere else. It is not in their creeds that men are generally erroneous. It is in their business, it is in their out door and every-day life, that they fall into mistakes. Out of doors we are all sin-

ners alike, no matter what we believe. We are all pressing on for outward exaltation; for treasures that the eye can see and the hands can handle. We are all living for the omnipotent present, and seeking to make ourselves happy by banking and building up on every side. And when we come to call men's attention to the fevered state of mind which grows up under these intensive goadings of industry; when we come to say to them, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and as much of these things as you need shall be added to you," they say, "Yes, that probably is true, *in a sense.*" But that is only an evasion. It is not true to them. They do not believe a word of it. When we preach to men, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal;" when we exhort them not to lay up their treasure in this world, where at the best it is evanescent, and where it is very feeble to create happiness, but to lay it up in the world to come, where will be enduring, and where it will be to them a source of "joy unspeakable, and full of glory"; when we tell them to be rich toward God, to be rich beyond, to be rich in hope and faith and pure love—they do not understand that, or they do not believe in it if they do understand it.

The scale of living, too, is so much raised by the very power of Christianity to intensify the human mind, society has so developed, and civilization, which always goes from simplicity toward complexity, requires so much more to make a man the equal of his fellows, that no man can keep upon his level without a great deal of activity. That is not an evil, although it is oftentimes perverted into one. The world has become very much like a treadmill. Formerly the wheel revolved so slowly that men could keep step, the laziest of them; but the great world now whirls round so fast that a man must run or drag. And the consequence is that they who, at the start, are comparatively feeble, or lacking in power, in ingenuity, in enterprise, or in efficiency, find themselves obliged to bustle up their step, in order to keep along with the march of their fellows or their class in society.

We always measure ourselves by relative standards; and he is rich that is richer than somebody else; and he is strong that is stronger than somebody else; and he is good or pure that is better or purer than somebody else whose life is keyed to a certain elevated standard. And so men are crowding one another, and there is infinite rivalry between them on every side, because they are striving to reach their ideal. Some men say, "I want to heap up great riches." A great many others say, "I do not want to be very rich. All I want is to have a fair equality with my fellow men." But their fellow men live in a stage of society,

a civilization, so complicated, with so many and such various wants to be cared for, with a demand for so many "conveniences" (the most intolerable nuisances in human life are these same *conveniences*—conveniences that have to be watered and pruned; conveniences—that have to be dusted and cleaned; conveniences—that have to be packed and unpacked; conveniences—that become moth-eaten; conveniences—that run zigzag, and all sorts of ways; conveniences—that keep people busy all the time)—their fellow men live on so comprehensive a scale, that it is impossible to keep equal with them. And so it is with society at large. There is prevalent such an intensive spirit of enterprise, that men are placed under a continual pressure. The very wealth of society in the station where you are, puts you upon an immense amount of exterior industry and of necessity in order to take care of yourselves—and that, too, when you only mean to be at a fair level or a fair equality among men.

I do not undertake to say that this state is not better than a savage or barbaric state; but I do say that, all the more, because this higher state has its attendant temptations, we need to hear the cooling, calming declarations that, after all, our life does not stand in external things: that a man may be a *man*, and not be rich, nor powerful, nor surrounded by all the objects which we are seeking; that though he may have and be happy in them, yet if, in the providence of God, he is overruled, and misses them, he should not think that he cannot be happy without them: and that if in the poorest man on earth, in a pauper, the kingdom of God is rich, he has laid up treasures above, the reflection of which will make him light and bright even here on earth.

Against this tendency to absorb all the forces of life and society upon our material conditions, the Saviour sets up a totally different career and course. The indispensable physical things of life do not require excessive toil or anxiety. That is to say, "your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things." It is as if the Master had said, "The divine government is such that a man can eat, and drink, and be clothed, and have a reasonable amount of comfort in his household, without excessive toil and taxation." There are special exceptions to this: but this is the general rule, comprehensively stated, in regard to the races, and the nations of the earth. All that is necessary to take care of the body does not need to consume the whole of life's forces. If a man has sought first and chiefly the soul's treasure—goodness, kindness, gentleness, devoutness, cheerfulness, hope, faith and love—he will extract more joy from the poorest furniture and outfitting of life than otherwise he could get from the whole world. For excitement comes from our lower passions: but joy comes only from our sentiments. A man may by excessive taxation reap excessive exhilaration

and excitement: but no man can get joy except from those branches on which it grows—namely, the affections and the moral sentiments. The appetites and passions do not give joy. Fiery excitements come from them; but joy comes only from the higher and nobler developments.

Therefore, after this outline of the course of life, the idea of it, its method and instruments, the whole is summed up by the Saviour in this: "*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*" "It is needless," he says, "that you should be bearing troubles; that you should be worrying over long plans ahead; that you should be wearing yourselves out with cares; that you should be subjected to all the suffering of possible evils in days to come. The true scheme of life, the highest wisdom in living, the hope of immortality, ought to dispossess the low and beggarly way in which men live. No man should allow himself to live from day to day under all that accumulation of care and burden which the future foretokens; and especially all the evils and mischiefs which fear and the morbid conditions of the mind forebode. No man has a right to import all these into a single day. But this is just what men are accustomed to do.

Each single and particular day is marked out by the providence of God, so to speak, that it may cut off the past and all its mischiefs, and that it may intercept and prevent all the possible mischiefs of the future. The question is, Have you grace given you to-day to lift the burdens of to-day? Have you grace given you to-day to be content with the condition of to-day? It matters not whether you have food for to-morrow, ordinarily speaking. There are exceptional cases, which I do not need to instance, as of voyagers on desolate islands, or men making preparation for long expeditions; but as men live ordinarily, it may be said that if a man can bear the load of to-day, the sorrows of to-day, the joys of to-day, that is all he need concern himself about.

I do not mean to be understood as saying that we do not need to lay our plans far ahead. For forelooking is not burdensome. It is no more burdensome to plan for the next year or the next month, than it is to plan for the next hour or the next minute. The use of your intelligence prophetically, as it were, along the line of cause and effect—that is not forbidden. Nor is it wrong for men, by faith or by hope, to look forward. That is pleasure-bearing. But to look forward or back in such a way as to bring unhappiness—that is disallowed. You have no right to do it. In each particular day you are to concentrate, and burden yourself with, only the troubles which belong to that day—that is, the troubles which spring from the circumstances of that day.

"But," says one, "the child may die to-morrow." Wait, then, till to-morrow, before you mourn the dying child. "But bankruptcy may

come to-morrow." Well, if to-day is the last day that you are not bankrupt, at least enjoy to-day. "But, how shall I provide for to-morrow?" The Master says, "Sufficient for to-day are the evils of to-day." Let the evils, let the sufferings, let the wear and tear of the care which belongs to each particular day, be enough.

Besides, there is a piece of humor in the reply. You will worry, you will fret, for to-morrow? "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" Or, in other words, how absurd it would be, to see a dwarf foaming, and worrying, and fretting, because he was only five feet high, and saying, "If I had been six feet I should have been an orator!" How absurd it would be for a short man to say, "If I were only as tall as ordinary men, I might have made my mark in the world; but I am this diminutive little imp, and I go tripping here and there just like a little whiffet, and nobody cares for me; and, oh! if I could only be taller, how much better I should be!" Our Master points to the absurdity of it; and no man can think of it without a smile of ridicule. If there is one thing that is more ridiculous than another, it is a man's trying to make himself taller by stretching upwards. Height is one of those things that a man before he is forty years old generally concludes to be content with. Men learn before they are very old, to take their features and their stature, and not attempt to change them. There are things that a man must carry along with him to the end of life. He cannot help himself. And our Saviour says, "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?" And why take anxious thought for the things of to-morrow? What odds will it make? Suppose you think ever so much, suppose you rasp your mind with fearful cares, will it make your case any better? Can you change to-morrow? Can you render inoperative the law of cause and effect? Can you by solicitous forelooking throw light into the shadow? Can you dissipate the lurking, or the supposed lurking evils, by a consideration of them? It is an impossible thing.

You are master of yourself to-day; but God gives you supremacy for only one day at a time. To-morrow is not your kingdom. Of to-morrow you have no scepter till to-morrow is to-day. No man owns anything until it has been converted into to-day. As fast as time is ours it is brought to us; and then we administer over it. And to-day I can say, "Can I get through to-day?" I never saw a man that could not get through a single day. That is a space that almost anybody can stride over. Almost everybody says, "I could get through to-day if I had reason to believe that to-morrow—." Oh! to-morrow does not exist to you. If you can bear your burden to-day, if you can carry your cross to-day, if you can endure your pain to-day, if you can

suffer the shame of to-day, if you can put down the fear of to-day, if you can find philosophy of contentment to-day, you will get along well enough. Take what comes to you to-day. To-morrow you have no business with. You steal if you touch to-morrow. It is God's. Every day has in it enough to keep every man occupied without concerning himself with the things which lie beyond.

When the pilot is steering on the Ohio river, he looks at the headlands miles beyond him, in order to know where he is; for he has been accustomed to judge of the twisting and torturous channel by certain of these headlands. And so a man may take headlands far down in the future to steer by, in order that he may be better enabled to run his keel in the channel that he is now in. By foresight we enable ourselves to get along better to-day; and by so much we have a right to look into the future. But all the foresight of a given day is only to be such as shall better fit us for the duties of that day. And when a man has got through with the waking hours of any single day, he has got through with his duty up to that point of time. Duties will begin again to-morrow; but all duties lapse and end with each sphere of active time given to man. You have enough work to occupy all your time to-day. And blessed be the man whose work drives him. Something must drive men; and if it is wholesome industry, they have no time for a thousand torments and temptations which they would otherwise have. And let him be thankful who has every day enough legitimate work to keep him busy.

A ship that has headway steers easy; but while it lies drifting in the tide you cannot steer it at all. It swings back and forth, and you have no control of it. First the stern is "on," then the bow, and then the broadside. And so it is with idle men. A man that has nothing to do is drifting and whirling around, and is liable to go on this mud-bank, or on that sand-shoal, or what not. He cannot manage himself. No man is so miserable as the man who is uncertain as to what he shall do. The French have invented a word—*ennui*—by which to describe the condition of such persons. We have not the word in the English language, but we have the *thing*—a good deal of it. The wretchedness which comes from a man's having nothing to do has deserved the invention of a phrase in language; and we borrowed it from the French.

I know what this thing is myself. I know that when I have a week or ten days in which I have nothing to do—nothing *special* to do—everything, and therefore nothing—no fixed plan—no pressure on every side—they are unhappy days. I am glad to get out of vacation into term-time again. I am glad to get back from the pasture into the harness again. I am glad to throw off the harness and go to grass; rest

in its place is appropriate and desirable: but work is also appropriate and desirable in its place. Work is not God's curse. Work is God's medicine. If it had not been for work when Adam and Eve were cast out of paradise, they would have died of their misery. Work comforted them. They tilled the earth; and in the sweat of their brow they ate their bread: and the sweat of their brow took off the fever that would have been in their blood and bones if it had not been for the work and the sweat. Every day ought to have enough work to occupy a man wholesomely. Every day has conflicts enough to fill up a man's whole time. If a man is trying to carry himself according to the spirit of true love, he has enough to occupy him every day. If a man is attempting to subordinate all his passions, he has work enough for every day. If a man is endeavoring to fulfill all the duties of life, he has enough to attend to every single day, without troubling himself about the duties of to-morrow. Every day has occupations of usefulness enough to keep a man busy all the while. A man's secular industry, his spiritual conflicts, and his life of benevolence, are ample contents with which to grace and fill up every day as it comes. And we ought not to meddle with to-morrow. You cannot do it without subtracting just so much from the fidelity of to-day. We have no strength to waste. The field is so large in any single day, that no man can perfectly till it; and why should he go over the bounds into the next field?

In God's economy, each day, well cared for, prepares for the next, as cause prepares for effect. Days are invisibly joined. You have, perhaps, jointed, anatomized, birds, or fishes, or animals. Did you ever play anatomy on your own action, to see what was the line of cause and effect all through one single day? Dissection requires the very nicest insight and judgment; but there is no such organization in matter and flesh as there is in that curious complication of cause and effect in things intellectual and social and moral, called human life. Each hour is the legitimate product of the hour which went before it. If this hour bulges like the arm joint, then the next hour is a socket into which it fits itself. And so one part articulates into another, each successive part being in some way logically connected with that which went before.

Now, if a man prepares for to-morrow by making to-day right, he can foresee what the effect will be. The next day will come up as the legitimate antithesis, or the legitimate consequence, of the right-lived day which prepared the way for it. And if a man, neglecting his duties to-day, thinks of what he will do to-morrow, the to-morrow which he thinks of will not come to pass. There will be a to-morrow, but it will be a different to-morrow from that which he anticipates. For each

to-morrow is the logical sequence of the right to-day, or the wrong to-day, as the case may be. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." He that can get through any single day wisely, will find that the next day will be more easy than to-day was.

No man can see what is to come after him. You burden your time, therefore, with unrealities. More than half the things that have made you unhappy, have had no existence.

If one is jaded, overworked, dyspeptic, it is a familiar symptom that when he wakes in the morning, all the world is clouded with gloom to him. When an overtaxed and overcerebrated man gets up in the morning, before his system has had time to carry itself up by excitement to its proper pitch, he is nobody, he thinks; he never was anybody, and he never will be anybody; nobody loves him; nobody ever did love him, and nobody ever will love him; he never did anything, and he never shall do anything; and he does not care. Everything he looks at has a *blue* side, as it is called. But by ten o'clock, what with a good breakfast, and what with the social activities of the meal, his nervous system becomes strained up, and he begins to get the full use of himself, and one cloud after another goes off, and about twelve o'clock he looks back and smiles at himself, and says, "I was a fool this morning. I can see it now, though I could not then. Everything I looked at was dismal. It was all unreal. It was purely imaginary—no it was not even imaginary: it was the result of a morbid imaginary state." And that which is true as judged by the previous hours of the day, is not true as judged by the subsequent hours of the day.

If one would only make statistics of his experience; if one would only keep a book, he would find that nine-tenths of the things which trouble and vex him are unreal, or else things which he ought not to have thought of, anyhow.

Why are you unhappy? "Well, here I am: I used to live in a brown-stone house, four stories high, with servants, equipage, and all that; and now I am brought down to this two-story house, with the plainest kind of carpets and furniture. All my circumstances in life are changed." Well, have you enough to eat and drink? Have you self-respect? Have you a sense of honor? Is life as beautiful as ever to you in all the developments which God has made in the heaven and on the earth. The flow of time; the procession of the seasons, the honor and respect of good men; the love that one bears to another under the same roof, and in the household—are all these great treasures given to you? Have you Christ, and God, and hope of immortality? What is the matter that you are so wretched to-day?

"Well, I feel my crown; I am the King's son; I have an eternal

inheritance; but this I have in a two-story house, and I want it in a four-story house!" Ought not such miserable creatures as he—that is to say, nine-tenths of us—to be whipped and scourged for so far lowering themselves as to forget all the magnitudes of manhood; all the essential verities of life; all the elements which go to make honor, and self-respect, and the mutual love and sweet endearments of the household; all the cheer on the pathway to the grave; the triumph of dying; the glory of the resurrection; the immortality of blessedness beyond death, where no wave-stroke of care ever comes? All these things are theirs professedly, and really, oftentimes; and yet they are low-browed, and anxious, and wearied, and have no comfort at breakfast, and have no cheer at dinner, and are miserable at tea; and they go discontented to bed, and get up discontented in the morning, and wear out their lives in fretting because they are not quite as properous as they want to be; because A. is more prosperous than they are; because they are not equal to B.; because the whole alphabet is against them!

More than that, if this class of frets and worries which we allow to disturb our happiness be taken out of the way, look at the anticipated ones that would be worthy of troubling us, and see how almost invariably they are like bubbles which we ourselves blow, and which we cannot breathe in the presence of without blowing them out.

A friend of mine explained to me his cure of speculating in stocks. It will not hurt some of you to hear the story.

He felt perfectly certain of making money; but he was held back by the influence of a dear friend—though rather impatiently. Having promised that he would not engage in speculation in stocks at all (that being out of his regular business), he thought he would do the next best thing—take a little book and see how it would come out. So every day when stocks were in the market, he would watch his chances, and now and then he would say to himself, "There is something to be made in that, sure; and if I could, I would buy a hundred shares;" and he would put down a hundred shares, with the price; and when he had a chance to sell a certain number of shares to a good advantage, he would put them down; and so he went on charging and crediting himself according as he would have dealt if he had been allowed to; and at the end of four months he summed the whole up, and struck a balance, and found that he would have been bankrupt four times over if he had done what he wanted to do! His dry brokerage, his book brokerage, satisfied him; and he attended to his own business with more content afterwards.

Now, if you kept a little book, I think it would do you good. If you would keep a book, and every day put down the things that pes-

ter you, and see what becomes of them, it would be a benefit to you. You allow a thing to pester you, just as you allow a fly to settle on you and plague you; and you lose your temper (or rather, get it; for when men are surcharged with temper they are said to have lost it); and you justify yourselves for being thrown off your balance by causes which you do not trace out. But if you would see what it was that threw you off your balance before breakfast, and put it down in a little book, and follow it up, and follow it out, and ascertain what becomes of it, you would see what a fool you were in the matter.

If you would in your housekeeping keep a little book, not of expenses, but of experiences, in this regard, just to see what comes of your forebodings and unnecessary cares, I think you would find out, in respect to your real, every-day life, that nine parts in ten of all the things which you bring into to-day from to-morrow, and from next week, are superlative ignorances and superlative impertinences, and that they are unreal.

But men are so conceited that the thing which they think of, they think to be true. This looming scare; this annoyance; this dampening and drooping of affection; this bereavement; all these spectral things which the imagination so lightly takes up—he does not stop to-day to see that they were all mistaken, but he goes over the same ground to-morrow, he takes up the same line, and allows himself to be scared here and there. And so cares, like mosquetoes, pester him. Each of them sucks a little speck of blood; but all of them nearly drain him dry.

Thus men wear themselves out by the attrition of little things not one of which is worthy of notice, but all of which together scour like emery.

We are to consider that God will give to every man who simply trusts with childlike faith in him, in his government, and in his presence, when trouble comes to a head, the grace and the strength that then shall be required.

I have known persons who anxiously foreboded their own death. "How," they said, "could I endure to die and leave this sweet band of children? I do not know what James would do if I were to leave him?" *James* usually is taken care of under such circumstances. "What would Mary do? It breaks my heart to think that I may die." Many a mother has sat with a slight cough, and with a little hectic color on her cheek, and studied as to how she could part with James or Mary and the little brothers and sisters. My friend, as long as you are alive and plump, it is not your duty to leave your dear ones. When you are called to leave those that are dear to you, it will be very easy for you to leave them.

In June, or July, or August, when the apple is green, you may go

out and tug at it, and it does not want to leave the bough, and it will not leave the bough. A multitude of strings tie it to the bough; and it says, "My business is to stick here till I am ripe." But by-and-by when it is ripe, all those juices which make the apple better, also prepare it to let go. And one after another of the fibres of the stem break, being no longer required to convey the juices from the bough to the fruit. And when, after this preparation, the time arrives for the apple to come off, down it drops so easy that it does not know what made it fall.

In the stillness of the night I have lain in my father's house in Litchfield, when it was so still that the silence ached in the ear, and have heard that sound, so joyful to the eager up-rising boy—the plumping down of the early bough-apple in the garden under my windows. It needed no wind, but only the difference of the weight of the dew at night, to pluck it off from the bough.

When the time comes for men to die, they die very easy, as a general rule. When your time to die comes, and you are to leave this world, do you suppose the Lord Jesus, who loves you better than you love yourself, has not arranged everything so that you will be willing to go? You want to feel willing now; but he does not want you to be willing. You want to be willing to leave your children when God wants you to stay with them and take care of them. You have the knowledge, the spirit of fidelity and the strength which qualify you for that work; and what are these but indications that your duty is to live and take care of them. This equipment is a sign and token that now, to-day, your duties are here; and it is right that at this time you should feel unwilling to die, though one year hence, or one month hence, you may feel, and it may be proper for you to feel willing to die.

And how absurd is this anticipating what is to come! When by and-by God leads you step by step, down to the trouble which you are thinking of, there will have been wrought such changes, and such preparations will have taken place, that it will not seem like a trouble.

According to my observation, there is nothing in the world which so rebukes forethought and anxiety as dying. I have seen the heads of the family go; I have seen the father and the mother go; "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The taking the heads of families, is like the sowing of wheat. The seeds, being scattered, take root for themselves, and grow. And children, when thrown upon their own resources, take care of themselves. Partridges know how to do it on the mountain: and so do children in the household, and everywhere. God takes care of your children. He took care of them through you to-day. It may be that he will take care of them without you to-mor-

row. You may be a good mother, whose children do better with you than they would without you; but I have seen children who did better after their mother was gone than they did before. At any rate, God will not forsake the children whose parents are called to leave them.

When the trouble comes, Christ will come with it. Never bear your cross till the cross is laid on your shoulder. Never cry about a trouble until God brings it to you, and puts it on you. Then you will find that with the troubles comes the preparation, so that they cease to be troubles.

Livingston, the traveler, describes, in one of his letters, his experience when he was struck down by a lion. It has been supposed that it must be a terrible experience to be in the clutches of a lion, and about to be destroyed; but he testifies that, when he was set upon and borne down by a lion's spring, and seized in his jaws, and dragged by him, from the moment that he was struck by the lion's paw, all fear and all trouble left him. It was a dream of peace with him. His intellect remained, and he supposed that he was about to be killed; but he seemed to be under a magnetic charm until sometime after he was rescued by the fidelity of one of his attendants, and the lion was driven off. He says that when he was in the clutches of the lion he was in a state of perfect peace. It seemed as though there was a provision by which, under the influence of magnetism, or mesmerism, or something of the sort, the suffering was taken away from the prey while it was in the jaws of the devourer.

And that which he found to be true in the case of a literal lion, thousands of men have felt in the moral kingdom. When the lion that they feared in the way set upon them, God either stopped his mouth, or rendered the stroke of his paw painless.

Our troubles are not once in a thousand times what we anticipate them to be. Many of those troubles which we are to bear, when the day comes, so far from being what we anticipated they would be, become positive sources of enjoyment. Oh! that men would derive from their past experience some little wisdom in respect to their future! We do this in our pecuniary affairs. If a man by a certain arrangement makes money once, he does not undertake the same operation again without remembering it, and making the same kind of a business turn, or, at any rate, acting upon the same principle. But in moral things we have the most wonderful experiences—experiences that are very deep, very sweet, very instructive, very profitable, going right to the very core of life itself; but afterwards we come into the same exigency, and profit very little from the instruction.

How many troubles, my friends, you have been through! And the Lord has sustained you in every one. Where are the troubles of last

year? Look back on them. How many were there? You cannot count them. You have only a vague idea of them. You may have passed through bankruptcy, or there may have been a death in your family; but aside from these you have no distinct recollection of the troubles that you have had within the past year. That brood of things which lowered the whole tone, the temperature, of your spirituality, and made those wrinkles on your brow—what became of them? Did they hinder you, or hurt you?

I used, when I was in the West, and traveled on horseback, to dread, all day long, the fords. I had a peculiar fear of fords, arising from an early experience in which I was twice swept away, and came near losing my life. Though I was courageous in most things, I dreaded fords, so dark and pokerish did they seem to me. In those mud-rivers of the West, one never knew when the ground might shift, nor what condition a certain ford would be in when he got to it. In going from place to place the thought of the fords I would have to cross was a perpetual torment to me. For instance, I would go through White river all right, and Blue river would be back of me; but there would be Eel river to come; and I could not get there till five or six o'clock in the afternoon; that was the worst ford (the one that is before is always the worst). At last I would come to it; and now I would brace myself up and go across; but instead of there being a raging, foaming torrent, such as I had imagined, the water would be so low that the horse would not go knee-deep in any place. And then I would be mad because it was not deep, after I had been fretting all day about it! When I came back on the other side, it would be no comfort to me that I had lately crossed with so little difficulty. "To be sure," I would say, "the ford was not deep then; but it may be now. How do I know but it has been raining there?" But when I would get to the ford again, I would find that it was no worse than it was before, and would laugh at myself. And I never got any wiser. I always was afraid of a ford.

Now, my friends, we, every one of us, have a ford somewhere that we are crossing every day; and we dread it and dread it until we get to it; and then we go over safely; but when we get on the other side we forget the lesson; and when we come back to it again we come with the same dread. We are not wise in the things which relate to our own happiness.

The backward look and application of this inspired teaching is also in point, and valid for our comfort and instruction.

Although men mostly borrow trouble from the future, there are a great many persons who bring in trouble from the past. Nothing is more common than to hear persons who have lost dear friends mourning the past.

One person says, "If I had known, I never would have taken that journey. My child never was well afterwards. And I might have known. I was cautioned by my neighbors."

Another says, "I ought not to have had that physician. I was told that if I employed him my child would never get well; and I did employ him. If I had taken the other doctor, I think I might have had my child with me now."

Another says, "The child dropped off between two o'clock and four, just when I was asleep, though I slept but ten minutes. It was wrong for me to be asleep at all. If I had been awake, doubtless I should have seen just the turn; and if I had stimulated the child just at the time when it began to run down, it probably would have rallied. But when I awoke it was too late, and the child sank, and sank, and died. If I could only——" *If*, and *if*, and *if!* These *ifs* are dragon's teeth to most men.

Now, did not you do all that you could? Did not you do the best that you knew how? Did not your heart prompt you to do everything in your power? Did not you bring all that God gave you to that hour? Even if you made a mistake, are we not permitted to make mistakes? All men make mistakes. I make many of them, and so do you. I do not understand all the laws of life, and you do not. And it is not surprising that this and that symptom were neglected. If we were omniscient and omnipotent, it would have been different. But we are finite, peccable creatures. And you did the best you could. Why not, therefore, shut up that chapter of experience, and let it go? Why mourn and carry heavy griefs on account of the troubles of the past? It is not wise. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

But time draws on. Let me say, in closing, that the grace which we need to enable us to avoid borrowing trouble from the past, and to avoid borrowing trouble from the future, is a divine grace. So are we fevered with life, so are we beset with a thousand provocations, so are we subject to the whims and caprices of the circle in which we live, so are we stimulated and excited by the very way in which life is organized, from which we cannot separate ourselves, and with which we are obliged to be in sympathy, that no man can be calm, contented, sweet-minded and triumphant in the present hour, unless he brings more than his own philosophy to bear.

A man said to me this last week, "When I go to bed at night, I say to myself, I have done the best I knew how all day, and I leave the rest with God." Brave man! That is the meaning of *Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you.* Lay your burdens upon him, and he will take care of all your mistakes, not only, but of all your wisdoms, and of your successes therein. His nature is benefi

cent; and Christ says, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Philosopher, you may cipher that out. He says that *not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice.* Physicist, fix that to suit yourself. I tell you, I am not going to live without a God, and a God that is better to me than I am to my children. He has called himself my Father, and he has told me to call him Father—and I will. He has told me that *everything is naked and open before him.* He has told me that he is bringing me up through trouble and suffering for eternal life and immortal glory, and I believe it. All that is generous and manly in me, and all that in me which has aspiration for dignity and honor, makes me believe that I am being conducted through this great and strange world by an all-guiding Father, for the sake of making me worthy to be his Son in the kingdom of his glory. And I will have the benefit of that belief. I will bring down my Father into each particular day, and say, "The providence of this day is thine. Manage it as thou wilt. I do not seek to pry behind the philosophy and find out how it is. Sufficient is it that I may cry and thou wilt hear. It is enough that I may cast my burden on thee, and that thou wilt take care of me." It is enough that the voices of thousands of witnesses in every age have risen up and said, "We have cast our burdens and cares on the Lord, and he has sustained us." It is the living testimony of the church universal, and it is the testimony of scores and hundreds in this church—of many a father and mother, and husband and wife, and brother and sister; of many a professional man; of many a man of business; of many a mechanic; of many a sea-faring man or day-laborer—that say, "In my rising up and in my lying down, in my going out and in my coming in, in all the exigencies of life, I have waited on the Lord, and he has succored me in the day of trouble." *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,* is the promise; and the application of the apostle is, *So that I may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

To disarm life thus of all unnecessary cares and fears—how blessed the task! how sweet the prerogative! How wise it is for a man to say, "My duties, my sorrows and my joys, for this day, are simply within the horizons of this day. I will take care of to-day faithfully. For, *sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!*" How wise it is for a man so to live until the last and the ransoming day comes, when God shall lift us into that land which is without a cloud, and without a care, and without a sorrow, and when we shall see him as he is, and be like him!

Christian brethren, hold on a little while longer. Let God turn over the leaves of the book of life for you; read contentedly what is written thereon, and do not seek to interline nor erase.

Let God manage my affairs for me Let him bring me sorrow, or exemption from sorrow. Let him bring me care, or release from care. It is his heart that loves, and his heart that guides, and his heart that is preparing me for the kingdom of glory. It is enough for me that my Father is taking care of me. So I will sing in sorrow, and I shall find the light in darkness, and victory in defeat, and joy through life and in death, and glory beyond.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, for all the greatness of that help which thou hast manifested, and which thou art willing to bestow. Thou hast set before us the door of opportunity. Thou hast in all our exigencies provided relief, and succored us in our wanderings. We are graciously restored by the Shepherd. We rejoice that we are safe, and that we are victorious, and that we shall yet appear in Zion and before God—though not by the merit of our own wisdom, and not because our strength is adequate, and not because we have the wisdom of goodness. We recognize our sinfulness, and the weakness that springs from it. We recognize our ignorance which is itself a sin, in things pertaining to God and to duty, in the midst of that great light in which we have always dwelt. We recognize our helplessness. Although we were clothed with power adequate to all our needs, yet we have weakened ourselves; we have by disuse rendered that power no longer available. We are strong in single things; but for all the duties of life how feeble and how poor are we! It is because thou, O Lord, by thy providence and by thy grace, hast undertaken for us, that we are confident both of victory here and of salvation hereafter. It is the love which is like summer to our souls, it is the fidelity of the divine and infinite love, it is the wisdom unsearchable and past finding out, of our all-guiding God, that shall bring us safely through. And so our trust for ourselves is not in our wisdom nor in ourselves at all. By the grace of God we are what we are; and that same grace shall make us whatever we shall attain unto in all the blessedness of the coming world, where ignorance ceases; where knowledge begins; where all joy shall begin to spring from pure founts inexhaustible. There, in our renewed existence, we shall be made worthy by the faithfulness, the love, the kind and nourishing care, of him who gave himself for us, that he might ransom us, and present us without spot or blemish before God.

We rejoice in thy goodness, Lord Jesus. We are thy disciples. We follow thee too often afar off; yet we are thine, and we would be filled by no other name. We would be found among thy people. We would evermore trust thee. Thou art here our solace, our example, our inspiration. Thee we follow in the way of self-denial and in the way of suffering. We would follow, also, in the valley and the shadow of death, and fear no evil there, because thou art with us, and thy rod and thy staff comfort us. We rise beyond into the certainty of immortality through thy divine power; and so shall we not praise thee and worship thee? Shall we not put thy name above every other name, and glory in it?

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that thou hast taught so many the secret way of life; the hidden joy; that thou hast caused thy name to be known

unto them as it is not known unto others. And we pray that thou wilt nourish in every such one the divine and secret life of the soul's innermost experience. Grant that such may grow strong in hope, and in love, and in patience, and in all suffering. And grant that they may learn to rejoice in infirmity and in trouble, and to bear every day their cross cheerfully. Grant that they may by faith annihilate time, and see the heavenly life begun even to-day, and begin that song which in sweet and inspired strains we shall complete in the heavenly land.

If thy people are vehemently tempted, grant that they may be rescued from temptation, and that the tempter may be driven away. If any of them are sitting in the shadow, bring light to them, and bring forth the day out of the twilight. If there be any hearts that are burdened with care, that cannot carry themselves happily, nor sing by reason of the troubles of the way. Oh! teach them how to cast away these troubles; how to gain victorious joy. Deign to remember them, and to sustain them by the grace of God in their souls.

We pray that the example of thy people may be such as to win men unto the Christian life. May they behold their sincerity, their uprightness, their gladness of heart, their exceeding great hope of the future. May they behold how thy people conquer the life that now is. May they behold them too, in sickness, conquering it, and in death triumphant. And so may the holy living and the holy dying of thy people be a perpetual lesson and gospel to those who are without.

We pray that thou wilt bless those to-day who are gathered together in thy churches. May they have communion with God. May thy servants that are appointed to teach them and comfort them, be themselves greatly comforted and instructed from on high. We pray that thou wilt make thy people everywhere more and more of one mind. May love prevail, and overcome reason, and overcom ~ conscience, and subdue them both to its sway. May love conquer all things. And may men learn both to believe and speak the truth in love, and in love to be just, and in love to discriminate, to smite in love, and to bind up in love, and so to be sons of God, who is Love.

We pray that thou wilt bless our land, and all lands. And spread intelligence abroad everywhere. Liberate the reason of men, and guide it by the divine Spirit. We pray that all machinations for the enthrallment of the human understanding, for the ensnaring of men's consciences, may come to naught. Wilt thou overturn and overturn till He whose right it is shall come and reign, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech thee that thou wilt uphold us by thy promises, and by the trust that our hearts have in thee. To whom shall we go but unto thee? We will not plunge into the abyss of unbelief. We will not go into that dark and dreary land of skepticism. We will have our God. Our hearts crown thee. Thou art the necessity of our life. We rejoice that thou dost make us, and so make us that we must make thee again to our imagination.

And now Lord, we give into thy hand and care everything that is needful for our best estate. We accord to thee foresight and faithfulness and care-bearing love. Thou art the Father, and thou art the Mother. In thee are all those things which we divide and call by differing names. All loves go back to thee, and are unitized in thee. All carefulnss, and all gentleness, and all generosity, and all tenderness, and all triumeph of love are in

thee, and flow forth from thine administration in this world, and shall forever and forever. And our trust is not in ourselves. It is not in this, that we are able to endure what must come, and what we cannot be rid of. Our trust is in this, that the dear, sweet God loves us, and by perpetual ministrations is preparing us for the heavenly home. And so we endure; and so we rejoice even in trouble.

And now, Lord, we pray thee, accept our thanks for all the goodness of days that are past. And we pray that thou wilt accept the consecration which we make of the hours yet to come. Ours they are not yet; but we remit them to thee. We will not invade them. Grant that we may live every day, writing upon the threshold of all our labor and care, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

And to thy name shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST.

"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him. Go home unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."—MARK V. 19.

This answer was in reply to an affecting appeal on the part of the man whose cure furnishes one of the most extraordinary scenes in the whole history of the Gospel. It was that poor wretch who lived in the tombs, and desolate places, cutting himself, crying day and night, stronger than armed men, stronger than chains and cords, and who, having gone through this terrific experience, was healed by Christ. And it is said of them, after the healing, "When he (Christ) was come unto the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him."

There is something touching in that clinging desire. Doubtless every tenderest feeling of gratitude was awakened in the heart of this man, and he clung to Christ with a true love. We may also believe—and it is not inconsistent with love—that fear mingled with it. That he was healed by this man he knew; but if he should go away, how did he know but his old enemy might take possession of him again? He was safe under the eye of Christ, and he felt safe nowhere else. It was not, therefore, unreasonable for him to beg that he might dwell with him. But, after all, home was for him a place of safety.

It is to be remarked that our Saviour, in selecting his disciples, did not, in any single instance (I do not recall one) select a man who had received great personal favor at his hand.

He selected none out of whom he had cast diseases or demons. He selected those who, though they were humble, came to him without special obligation. Whether he thought that such an one was not a fit person to be in the disciple-band; whether he thought that no one who had had an infirmity should be ranked in any sense as a teacher, we are not informed. At any rate, when the man begged to go with him, he answered, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

To do this was itself a kind of assurance, a preservative, to him. It

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was just the place that a restored man ought to have gone to, not simply from considerations of his own personal safety and well-being, but from considerations of gratitude. Those who had borne with him, who had sacrificed much for him, who had suffered on his account, had a right to the joy of his recovery; and it is a rare touch of human feeling in the Saviour, that he sends this man back home, first, to comfort them. "Go let them know what the Lord hath done for you."

Our Master was especially sensitive to the recognition of gratitude. When he performed a work of mercy, he desired that men should confess it—make it known. That they would recognize it to his face was not to be doubted; but he wanted them to make it known to others. There are special occasions of exception, where the jealousy of the government was so extreme that the least addition to the popular excitement might carry it over the bounds, and give occasion to the Roman army to fall upon the Jews, and butcher them.

In certain cases, out of motives of humanity, the Saviour sometimes charged men not to tell any one of the miracles that he had performed in their behalf. Under such circumstances the reason was one of humanity, and was local and special. But generally, when there was no such harm to be apprehended, the Saviour, on the other hand, commanded men to make known their experience, and the part which God had had in it.

It is from this narrative, and this general statement, that I propose, this morning, to speak on the duty of witnessing to Christ's work in us. It is just as incumbent now, as it was in his own day. It is just as incumbent in respect to spiritual things as it was with regard to physical mercies.

In general, every man who believes himself to be a Christian, is bound to make such public acknowledgment that men shall know the source of his godly life. There is a vague popular impression that a man should join a church, and there are good cautionary reasons why he should; but that, it seems to me, is not the most felicitous way of putting it. Every man who is conscious that his character has been brought under the power of the Spirit of God, is bound to let men know that the life which is flowing out from him now is not his own natural life, but one which proceeds from the Spirit of God. He is bound to make a public witness and testimony that the work of morality, of virtue, of spiritual fervor, of higher manhood, to which he has been called, and in which he is beginning to live, is a divine work, and not one that springs from a lower form of natural causes, or from natural causes only.

This would seem too obvious for remark, did not facts show that multitudes of men endeavor to live Christianly, but are very cautious

about saying that they are Christians—and from shame-faced reasons, sometimes; from reasons of fear, sometimes; from reasons of pride, sometimes. Men who are endeavoring to live Christianly say, often, "Let my example speak, and not my lips." Why should not a man's lips and example both speak? Why should not a man *interpret* his example? Why should a man leave it to be inferred, in this world, that he is living simply by the power of his own will? Why should he leave it for men to point to him, and say, "There is a man of a well-regulated life who holds his temper aright; but see, it is on account of the household that he has around him; it is on account of the companionship that he keeps; it is on account of the valorous purpose which he has fashioned in his own mind"—thus giving credit to these secondary causes, and not to that divine inspiration, that power from on high, which gives to all secondary causes their efficiency? When the lines are drawn in this world, and there are but two parties—one comprising those that live by the Spirit, and the other those that live by the flesh—why should a man live by the divine Spirit, and yet not give credit to the Spirit, by which he lives?

A physician has a right to the testimony of every man that he heals. In proportion to the desperateness of the disease which he has healed, he has a right to an open and wide-spread credit for the skill which he has displayed.

The excuses are invalid which men make for withholding this open profession of faith in Christ Jesus. Not only are they invalid, but they are dangerous.

The uncertainty of the result is one reason that holds men back. They *do not wish to be premature.* They *do not wish to bring disgrace upon the cause of Christ by not continuing.* They express themselves in this delicate way. It is as if I should rescue a man from drowning, and he should say to me, quietly, and secretly, "I thank you now; but I do not wish to commit myself openly to giving you credit, lest I should not hold out in this grateful strain of my life. You have been my benefactor, and have saved me; but I want to see if the impression lasts with me before I confess it publicly." What will make the impression last but being true to it?

A man says, "I believe that I have entered upon a Christian life. If I understand my own thoughts, if I know my own settled purpose, it is that hereafter I will accept the law and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ as the rule of my life. I am determined to acknowledge my allegiance to him, and hold myself responsible for living in accordance with his will. But let me see how I succeed for a time, before I let it be known." Ah! look well to your heart. It is true that you may be actuated by a worthy motive, though it be a mistaken one,

for making this excuse; but it is more likely than not that you will find a sinister motive coiled up in it as well. While you talk of *fear of bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ*, is there not underneath that the fear of bringing disgrace on yourself, by falling away from an open confession? While you speak of not wishing to *wound Christ in the house of his friends*, may it not be that you are afraid of wounding yourself in the house of your companions or friends? While you seek to be *rooted and grounded in the faith before you openly profess it*, may it not be, after all, that you are leaving the root in dry ground, without water or nourishment; and that, for lack of that commitment, which you now need more than you will at any other time—for lack of firmness, and openness, and manliness—you may go back upon your steps?

The time to make known a man's purpose is when it is freshly formed. And surely, no man need say, "I have occasion to wait and consider," who has been taught in religion from the morning of his life. In the case of a heathen child that might be a wise purpose; but you who have been brought up in the knowledge of the Scriptures; you who have had doctrine exercised upon your reason perpetually for scores of years; you who have thought of religion in its relation to the time that now is, and in its relation to the time which is to come—you need to wait lest you should be precipitate? You, after thirty or forty years of instruction and vehement urging, need to wait lest you be precipitate? Why, there is no man that can be precipitate who has always lived in a Christian community, and had Christian instruction. It is not possible to take you suddenly and unawares. You are full enough of knowledge to make a simple beginning, and, making a beginning, to make an announcement of it.

But while this general confession is sound and obligatory, the emphasis and weight of this discourse I desire to rest upon what I may call the duty of a more particular or personal acknowledgment,—a more specific testimony to the help which men have received at the hands of the Lord.

In the first place, there is a mode in which men can bear testimony to their own conversion, to its need, and to its reality. I suppose that Dr. Chalmer's conversion has been blessed as much as any of his sermons, and perhaps more, to the conversion of others. He was a man who had true ideas of morality, based on the Socinian doctrine. He was a man of great power; of great imagination; and in the early part of his ministry he had all the qualifications necessary to make him a leader of his age in the Christian Church. But later than that he was convinced of his lowness in the Christian life, he was convicted of sin, before God, he wrestled in distress of mind, and he finally threw

himself on the mercy of the Lord Jesus, and was brought out of darkness into great light. And then, from that moment, began the real power of his Christian ministry. It was this personal Pentecost which brought him out into the open day, that was largely the secret of that saving influence which he afterwards exerted upon others. And the statement of that fact has been very powerful ever since—the fact, namely, that a man may be a good man, a true man, a preacher of the truth, and the doer of a great deal of good, without having reached the very beginning of a Christian experience. This after-experience of enlightenment, this lifting him up into a higher sphere, has been a very great power all over the world, to arouse men to a sense of the danger of rooting themselves upon a mere morality. Not that morality is to be despised, but morality compared to religion is what leaves are compared to fruit. Though the leaves are necessary to the fruit, they are not themselves the fruit.

Now, because a man may use this improperly, we ought not to infer that he should not use it at all. If God has revealed himself to you; if there has been an experience by which you have been made to know the hidden evil of your life; if you have consented to be the Lord Jesus Christ's, and if there has been a conscious change and elevation of your life, the fact of this conversion should be testified to. Others should know it. Sometimes it may be proper to state it in a public gathering, or in a social circle; but from man to man one of the most powerful instruments that you can employ for the conversion of others, is the relation of that personal history which God has given to you. If you talk with men, that in you which has been an experience is the most powerful to them.

Two men come together, one of whom is shrunk and crippled with a rheumatic affection, and the other of whom is walking in health and comfort; and the well man says to the other, "My friend, I know how to pity you. I spent fifteen as wretched years as any man ever spent in the world. I, too, was a miserable cripple, in the same way that you are." And the man with rheumatism at once says, "You were?" He sees him walk; he sees how lithe and nimble he is; he sees that he can straighten out his limbs, and that his joints are not swollen; he sees that he is in the enjoyment of all his bodily powers; and he is eager to know more about it. "Yes, I was as bad off as you are, and I suffered everything." "Tell me what cured you." There is nothing that a man wants to hear so much as the history of one who has been cured, if he, too, is a sufferer.

This is so, not only where the suffering is physical, but also where it is spiritual. It is so where a man suffers from sinful dispositions, and is discouraged, hopeless. Everybody makes some fight against

the evil that is in him, at times. Everybody has some hours in which he wishes he could be free from the body of death to which he is chained. Everybody that is living in sin, if he meet a man whom he believes to be honest and sincere, and who says, "I, too, was once diseased, as you are; I, like you, was under the condemnation of sin"—everybody, under such circumstances, has that in him which leads him to want to know how relief has been obtained. And if you can tell men that are in bondage to sin what God has done for your soul, clearly, intelligently, discreetly, the history of your experience is probably more gospel to them than you could preach in any other way.

We send out men to bear witness for Christ. It is the Christ *in them*—so far as he *is* in them—that they are to preach. It is not the theological Christ, necessarily, it is not necessarily the Christ of the Gospel, it is not even the Gospel, alone, that is to be taught. Your specialty in teaching is *Christ in you the hope of glory.* How much has been turned into personal experience, how much God has manifested himself as able to save you from sin—this is the Christ, this is the Gospel, that you need to preach.

This man whom Christ had healed went back to Decapolis, where he belonged, and began to publish all through that region what the Lord had done for him. It is not likely that he undertook to explain what Christ was, or what other works of mercy he had done. He doubtless said, "Here I am before you—I, that miserable demoniac; I, that poor creature that raged, and foamed, and cast off all bonds, and all raiment, and went out from society, and lived in tombs. Wretch that I was, Jesus saw me, and had compassion on me. He spoke the word, and my enemies departed, and I was restored to my right mind. Here I am rational. Here I am wholesome and healthy. Here I am happy again. And Jesus did it! Jesus did it!" Through all the towns and villages of Decapolis this man preached Jesus, declaring that he had power to save men from the demons that possessed them.

There are multitudes of men who have been convicted of their sins, and have been lifted by the power of the Holy Ghost out of their state of condemnation, and into the Christian life; and yet, they never open their lips in acknowledgment of the benefit which they have received. Certainly they do not with that personality, that freshness, that minuteness which is necessary to make it valuable to others. They do not go to one and another person who is bestead as they were, and say, "I, too, was as you are. Let me recount what Christ did for me." Oh! there is power in that.

When a boy, healthy and hearty, living in a happy family, and the son of a man much respected, I had about everything that a boy want-

ed; but I used to lie in my little cot and look across the room at Charles Smith—a black man; a man as black as black could be; a man without the suspicion of a drop of white blood—I used to lie and look at him, and cry, and wish I was Charles Smith. I, that had everything—heritage, family, influence, undeveloped resources whose first beatings I then began to feel—was deeply affected to see that *black* black man lying in his bed, singing his hymns, wiping his eyes, and every once in a while turning to tell me what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for his soul. I believe he was a Christian. I saw him in the barn; I saw him in the fields; I saw him when he had hurt himself; I saw him under all circumstances; and he bore silent as well as vocal testimony that he had seen the Lord Jesus, and been transformed by the power of his might. He used to tell me (and I used to get him to tell it over and over again) the story of his conversion, till he got tired of telling it to me. And oh! how it sank down into my heart! That was one of the earliest of my awakenings. My early life was very much like a corduroy road in Indiana. There were beautiful prairie flowers on every side of me, but the road that I traveled was full of chuck-holes, over which I went bump, bump, all the while. About half the time I lived under conviction, and the other half of the time I was getting over it. Every time I heard anybody who had experienced a work of Christ in his heart narrate the history of that work, I had days of anxiety, and days of longing. Oh! if I had only had somebody to tell me that Jesus loved me; if I had only had somebody to take me up in his arms and explain to me that Jesus loved me as my mother did, and did not wait, before loving me, till I was better, what a help it would have been to me! I suppose that I had it said to me many times; but it did not come with any of those illustrations or picture-forms which were so needful to my mind. And I went on twenty years before I found out the simplest truth in the world. But I found out one thing, and that was, that a real Christian man, telling what Christ had done for his soul, was to me like the sound of the eternal world. There is not a man in this congregation so poor and illiterate that, if God has had mercy on his soul, and he is converted, he has not the power to go to some other poor illiterate man struggling in his sin, and say to him, "My dear fellow, it is not needful that you should die in your sins. I have been a captive like you, but I broke my bonds. And let me tell you how the Lord helped me to do it." Go tell these things to men, and see if God does not clothe you with strange power. It is more than the power of eloquence. There is nothing so eloquent as the work of God in the soul of a man.

There is another testimony that I think ought to be borne—namely, the revelation of the progress or growth of the idea and consciousness

of sin. There are a great many persons who have dramatic awakenings. These are extremely fascinating to young ears. And where young men and maidens hear a person give an account of the great labor, of the darkness, and of the conversion that supervened on one of these dramatic awakenings, they feel that that has the divine signet; and so they want to have one of these supereminent, pictorial, scenic, almost tragic conversions. But they do not have it. And it would be a comfort to them, if they could have a man come to them and say, "God opened my eyes, to be sure, before I came to Christ, and was saved by him; but what I knew then was nothing in comparison with what I have learned since. I never knew what sin was until after I undertook to overcome it, to put the bridle and harness on my sins, and make them train according to method and rule. I knew that I had pride, and I had some sense of the wickedness of pride before God; but it was not until I undertook to overcome my domineering pride, it was not until I knew by further acquaintance what was the sweetness, and power, and exaltation and nobleness of the divine life in Jesus Christ, that I had a realizing sense of the enormity of that pride. And now my imagination seems poorer than ever, and my heart seems more narrow, and my best things seem feebler, and my worst things seem stronger. And this consciousness that I am sinful grows on me every year. I have a revelation of it every day. And I tell you, my friend, I was never convicted of sin at the beginning as I have been since that day.

Now, this growing sense of sin is more important than to have a great thunder-clap. There is nothing that it is more desirable to have go on to the end of your life, than this sensibility to the work which grows up in every faculty. It is wholesome.

There are thousands of men, who, when they talk about it, say, "I sometimes doubt whether I am a Christian. I never had such a work of the law as I suppose a great many men have, when I came into the Christian life—if I ever did come into it I came in peacefully. I came in tranquility. I knew I needed forgiveness, and I hoped I had it; but I was not wrestled with. I was not flung up into the cope of fear. I was not plunged down into the abyss of despair. It all seemed natural. I came right along into the Christian life, without any sudden change in my state of mind." Well, how has it been with you since? Have you never had any sensibility? "Oh, yes. Since I have been trying to be a Christian, I have seen a great deal more of my sinfulness than I had ever seen before."

My friend, you have had a history of what is wanted in thousands of men around about you; and what you are called upon to do is to go to men who have been brought to the point where they are balancing in their minds whether to go forward, and who are waiting for

more feeling and deeper conviction, and say to them, "Get your conviction afterwards. March *first!* Start!"

When a watch-maker sets a watch, he almost always stops it first, in order to get the second-hand right; and then, at the right second, he gives it a turn, and starts it. But suppose, having stopped a watch, he should lay it down, and should not start it till he knew whether it would keep time or not, how long would he wait?

There are a great many men who are set exactly right, and all that is wanted is, that they should start, and go on and keep time. But no, they are not going to tick until they know whether they are going to continue right or not. And what is needed is, that somebody, out of his own experience, should say to them, "You are under an illusion. Your reasoning is false. You are being held back by a misconception. You have enough sense of sin to act as a motive. If you have wind enough to fill a sail, you have enough to start a voyage with. You do not need to wait for a gale before you go out of the harbor. If you have enough wind to get steerage-way, start!" And if a man has enough feeling to give him an impulse forward, let him move. After that he will have more and more feeling. The Christian life is one that quickens the imagination, gives clearness to the understanding, sharpens the susceptibilities, and brings a man more and more consciously into a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, and fills the soul full of this special experience.

It is too often made to be exclusively the business of the pulpit to teach this thing; but it ought to be the teaching of man to man.

There is also a testimony of joy which we owe to the Saviour, to ourselves, and to our fellow men. The sweetness, the power and the frequency of that joy which God sheds abroad in the converted soul, ought to be made known. It may not be possible to express it with any considerable accuracy. No words can follow the feelings. Feelings lift themselves up so high, and spread themselves so wide, and are so evanescent, so changeable, so opalescent, that no words were ever made, in any language, that could fully give expression or symbolization to them. And yet, every man may be able to express his feelings sufficiently to excite hope and desire and strife in others.

There is a certain experience of joy narrated that I think is mischievous. I sometimes hear men speak in the most undiscriminating way in meetings (I do not mean in our own), where they say, "I used to be very unhappy, but since God shone on my soul, I have not seen a cloud. All day long, from morning till night, and from day to day, I am in an empyrean of joy." I do not believe it, in the first place. A man might just as well say to me, "I had my violin tuned fifty years ago, and it is in as good order now as it was then, and there has not

been a string touched since." I do not believe it. I do not believe a cat-gut was ever made that did not shrink and lengthen by the stress of weather. If a man tells me that he has an uninterrupted and uniform experience of joy, I do not believe him. If he says he has come into a high state of joy, I am not disposed to doubt that; but however high that state of joy may be, it must have gradations, sometimes flaming up into glorious light and admirable beauty, at other times lingering in twilight, and at other times going out in darkness, so that for a period there is a total abstinence from joy. That is the normal, and that is the necessary experience of joy, where it is wholesome.

A man may come, in the later stages of experience, to the land of Beulah, where he can say that he has continuing and abiding joy; but in the earlier period, during the whole period of struggle, when a man is casting out the Amalekites, and Hivites, and Hittites, and Jebusites, and Amorites, and taking possession of the land of promise, this joy is not continuous. It alternates. Sometimes it comes in large sheeted glory. At other times it comes trickling penurious as a rill from the side of a rock. But nevertheless, there is, in every true Christian experience, in the experience of every man who is at all living in vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ, enough joy to enable him to say, "Religion is a joyful experience. It has its struggles and self-denials; but after all, I am happier with it than I used to be without it. I am a great deal happier as a Christian than I ever was before I became a Christian." If your life is consistent (and this confession of Christ will help to make it so, by putting you under new bonds for good behaviour), there are many persons to whom this testimony of joy in Christ will be very powerful. Little children, I think, are generally happy; but after persons have escaped from childhood, they are like Adam and Eve when they were driven out of Paradise. Eden is behind them, and the wilderness is before them.

I am touched to think how little joy there is in the world. I am touched by the mute supplication of universal experience for some joy. The very wildness with which men rush after pleasure, the very remorselessness with which they seek first one thing, and then another, is a silent testimony to the desert condition of their heart. Men know that there is such a thing as joy; they long for it; they seek it; they strive after it; but alas! the experience of men is that there is comparatively little joy in this world.

When, therefore, one says, "Christ has blessed my soul, and brought me into a sweet knowledge of himself, and at times I have joy unspeakable, and full of glory," the knowledge thus conveyed that there is such a joyful state is most powerful to bring men into the Christian life, as it has been in the cases of multitudes in the past.

And it is the duty of every man that is a joyful Christian to bear witness to the good that he has received at the hand of God. It is his duty to go into all his neighborhood, and, with suitable words, and with proper discretion, to bear testimony to the joy-producing power of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was as much struck, when I traveled in England, with the stinginess of the people there in respect to their gardens, as with anything else. It was afterwards explained to me, as owing partly to conditions of climate, and partly to the notions of the people. I traveled two miles along a park shut in by a fence that was probably twelve feet high, of solid brick, and coped with stone. On the other side were all sorts of trees and shrubs, and though I was skirting along within a few feet of them, I could not see a single one of them. There were fine gardens in which almost all the fruits in the world were cultivated, either under glass, or against walls, or out in the open air; and a man might smell something in the air; but what it came from he had to imagine. There were plants and shrubs drooping to the ground with gorgeous blossoms, and there might just as well as not have been an open iron fence, so that every poor beggar child might look through and see the flowers, and feel that he had an ownership in them, and congratulate himself, and say, "Are not these mine?" Oh! I like to see the little wretches of the street go and stand before a rich man's house, and look over into his grounds, and feast their eyes on the trees, and shrubs, and plants, and piebald beds, and magnificent blossoms, and luscious fruit, and comfort themselves with the thought that they can see everything that the rich man owns; and I like to hear them tell what they would do if they were only rich. And I always feel as though, if a man has a fine garden, it is mean for him to build around it a close fence, so that nobody but himself and his friends can enjoy it.

But oh! it is a great deal meaner, when the Lord has made a garden of Eden in your soul, for you to build around it a great dumb wall so close and so high that nobody can look through it or over it, and nobody can hear the birds singing in it. And yet, there are persons who carry a heart full of sweet, gardenesque experiences all the way through life, only letting here and there a very confidential friend know anything about the wealth that is in them.

How thankful I am to men who have sung their experiences in hymns! Those hymns are my bells. I have strings and strings of bells wherever I go, because I have hymns singing to me all manner of things. I thank those dear sweet Christian natures whose letters and journals, containing accounts of their higher Christian experiences, have been published. I read them over and over again. These are the places where I gather food for sermons. If a man's heart only rubs

against books, it gets rusty and dry. You want to rub your hearts against living hearts and real feelings. And I am under everlasting obligation to many and many a man who wept that I might not weep; to many and many a man who moaned, and saved me from a great many moans; to many and many a man who rejoiced, and doubled my joy, and gave me power to make others happy.

Christian brethren, if Christ has waked up in your souls the premonitions of heavenly joy; if you have sweet delight in spiritual things, you have a gospel to preach. It is *your* gospel. Christ is in it—*Christ formed in you the hope of glory.* There is your sermon: there is your lecture; there is your conversation.

But joy is not the only experience, I am sorry to say. Who is there among us that ever kept a sober, even, consistent Christian life? Who is there here that has not fallen into sin? Who is there here that has not backslidden? Who is there here that has not grown faint in his first love? Who is there here that has not at times been brought to the blush to think what things he has thought, what things he has said, and what things he has done? Who is there here that has not suffered shame, and whose shame has not sometimes well-nigh come to remorse itself? Who is there here that does not feel, though he is a Christian, and though he does not give up his hope of living as the Lord would have him, that he is filled with imperfections, and is perpetually backsliding?

It is worth our while to bear testimony to these things, partly for our own humiliation, and partly to show those who are less instructed than we are, how Christ brings us out of such states.

I think a great many are profited by hearing an upright, honest, straightforward man of business, whom they have thought to be rather a remarkably good man, whom they have watched and tried, and whom they believe to be a Christian if anybody is one—I think a great many are profited by hearing such a man relate his religious experience. Here is a man that for some years has been trying to be a Christian. Though he now and then has gained slight victories, he has kept doing wicked things, and has slipped here and there, so that he has felt that it was useless for him to attempt to go forward. But somehow he has held on, God being more faithful to him than he was to himself. And he gets up in meeting and says, "I have to bear testimony, to-night, brethren, to God's great love and redeeming mercy to my soul, in calling me back again, and bringing me safely out of those dreadful conflicts which I have had with my pride and avarice." And he goes on and narrates how he had been carried away by lust of money; how far it had taken him; what dangerous ground he stood on; how he began to look about for help to recover himself; how he prayed; how

God came to his rescue; how he was restored to his right mind; and how at last he got back again.

This man says, in his own mind, perhaps, "I do not know but it may do more harm than good for me to confess that I am subject to such wickednesses and such backslidings." But what is the result? There is a young man sitting in the corner, who has almost made up his mind that it is of no use for him to try to be a Christian, he has such terrible adversaries in himself; and when he hears this man say that he, too, has just such adversaries, he says, "Did you ever hear such a story? I would not have dreamed that that man had a flaw in him. If he has such struggles, there is a chance for me. He and I have the same difficulties to contend with. He has got along, and why may not I? I will take courage from his victory, and strive to gain one myself."

The sweet things that John said do not comfort me half so much as the wicked things which he did. John, you know, wanted to call down fire from heaven and burn the villagers, because they would not follow Christ, and entertain him, and obey him. That has done me an immense deal of good. I have great regard for the apostles, for they turned out well at last: but when I see the hole of the pit, and what work they had to get out, I say, "There is hope and a chance for me."

Ah! it is the fellow-feeling of sinfulness; it is the sense that we are weak, and that there is a power which takes Christians that are inconsistent, and are tempted more than they are able to bear, and lifts them out of their difficulties, and starts them again: it is this dear love and grace of God, that comforts and encourages a man. If to be a Christian means to go right straight forward without a flaw, then I have no hope. How is it with you? But if a man may be a Christian who is going zigzag, stumbling here, and falling away there, and if God's convoying grace will bring him out safely—that is, if other men are just like me—then I will strive on.

Are there not many burdened hearts to whom you could bear this testimony, and to whom it would be a ray of light and hope? A man might be as eloquent as an angel, and his voice might ring out like the music of a trumpet, and he would not do as much good as the simple testimony of a suffering heart that the grace of God was sufficient for it in the day of temptation.

There are a great many experiences in life to which we are continually called, and into which we go, where we need the testimony of our Christian brethren, as well as their sympathy, to hold us up. We are all of us subject to great providential trials. Sometimes they are trials of bereavement. Sometimes they are trials of great perplexity and

anxiety. And the worst of it is that prudence will not allow us to make them known. *The distresses, the cares, the vexations of business*—these are smooth words; but I tell you there is more suffering in a business life than ever was seen in the inquisition of Spain or Rome. I never saw such anguish as I have seen in men bestead with trouble in business. Every feeling in them was alive. Their honor was imperiled. Their prosperity was all at stake. Their love was apparently excoriated for their household—their children, their wife, and their companions; for those from whom they had borrowed; for those whom they had led into disastrous enterprises; for those whom in their fall they had crushed, as the great tree in the forest crushes the smaller trees around about it when it falls. Those things which lacerate and tear a man in the most sensitive places we speak of as *business cares*. But I tell you, the torments of the damned are suffered on this side by men of business. I do not myself wonder that sometimes men harrassed by business troubles lose their reason and commit suicide. I have seen men that were held back only as by a hair from self-destruction, on account of the anguish and agony of feeling induced by mere business matters.

If, then, a man who has gone through a great fight of affliction can stand up in our meetings, and say, as I have heard persons say, in regard to their empty cradle, "It was very hard to bear, but Christ was present with me in the midst of my affliction, and helped me, and I have lived through it," that always does me good.

I have had brethren come to me and say, "If it had not been for your hopeful style of preaching, I never should have gone through that great crisis. I used to think during the week that I should have to give up; and then on Sunday I would come over and hear you preach, and your sermon would lift me up and sustain me, and I would go over another week." And that did me a great deal of good.

But why did you not say that in the meeting? You knew that everybody was informed of your great trial; and why did you not get up and bear witness to what Christ did for your soul while you were going through that terrific scene of anguish and suffering? Why did you not say, "I have suffered, and been upheld in suffering?" Why did you not open your heart? Were you afraid that men would scoff at you? What is the church for but to afford a man the benefit of the sympathy of his brethren? And is it not right that you should make known your trials, not only that your brethren may sympathize with you, but that others may profit from your experience?

A great many men suffer under cover, shut up, as it were, in a tight place, on the plea that it is not prudent to make their situation known. I think the most miserable wretch on earth is a man who has to act as

though he were rich, when he is bankrupt; a man who does not dare to get along with less than three servant girls, and does not dare to live in a house less than four stories high, and does not dare to have his wife and daughters dress in anything less than silk, lest his creditors should notice it, and suspect his condition, and all come down on him, and crush him.

Oh! I pity men who are obliged to play that game before the world, and who have everybody running to them on the supposition that they are rich, and asking them to give to this and that charitable object, and saying, "Why do you not subscribe? You are not as generous as you used to be." I pity men who are raked inside and out by financial troubles, and cannot say a word, but have to be dumb and suffer. By-and-by God will give them bankruptcy, and then they will feel better. There is many and many a man who, when he struck bottom, thanked God for it,—though he cried all the way down.

It is this awful suspense, it is this rasping uncertainty, it is this terrific fear, it is this busy imagination which pictures ten thousand probable and improbable things—it is this that torments men. But is there not a grace of God in Christ Jesus that can carry a man through all this? Is not the whole Hebrew story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, a symbol to teach us that men can go through burning fire and come out without the smell of it on their garments, if the form of the Fourth is seen walking with the three? And how many men there are who have gone through the fires of affliction and trouble, and come out of them unscorched, and saying, "Jesus has been faithful to his promise. I have suffered, but no more than was for my good. And he has comforted and sustained me. And I am as happy now as a sweet little child in the arms of its mother."

Oh! bear witness. These are precious things that you are conceal ing. Wear those jewels. Let men see what it is to be comforted in the midst of trials and troubles.

I know how I feel myself. I am constantly called to funerals. Some that I see who mourn, I am sorry for. Their rain is turned to ice. Grief is beautiful, as in winter ice-clad trees are beautiful, when the sun shines upon them; but it is dangerous. Ice breaks many a branch; and so I see a great many persons bowed down and crushed by their afflictions. But now and then I meet one that sings in affliction; and then I thank God, for my own sake, as well as for his. There is no such sweet singing as a song in the night. You recollect the story of the woman who, when her last and only child died, in rapture looked up, as with the face of an angel, and said, "I give you joy, my darling." That single sentence has gone with me years and years, down through my life, quickening and comforting me. If it had not

been spoken, or if it had not been reported, it would have been lost to you and me.

Some of the most precious experiences that ever grew on the boughs of the human soul you have had, but have never uttered. You have never told them even to your companion. Frequently husband and wife are ignorant of each other's richest experiences. We do not talk enough one to another about these things. As we go through life, God is doing exceeding abundantly more for us than we ask or think, in every way; and there is great comfort and great evangelizing power in it; but it lies dead.

There are a great many who could bear witness in respect to what God has done for their households. I have seen households that were scenes of clamor and disorder and unhappiness, by the grace of God restored. Their foundations were relaid; frugality took the place of spendthriftness; and order, regularity and peace reigned where before were quarrels and all manner of outrages. The whole atmosphere was one of true morality and pure religion. Oh! what a testimony such persons could give of the power of God's grace in their experience!

I have known others who, according to the manner of this world, were living ordinarily well, some of whom, when I have casually spoken to them, have said to me, "I wish you would come and see me, that I may tell you what you have done for me. It is the truth in Christ which you have preached, it is the Gospel which you have made known, that has lifted my family a thousand degrees higher than they were before. We owe everything to Christ as held forth by you." These are precious testimonies. And if men could only hear them, if they could be made known with simplicity and naturalness, with the eloquence of true feeling, do not you suppose that the Gospel would have much more power in the community than it now has?

Doctrine is important; but this is not the work of doctrine. Exposition is important; but this is not expository work. So much of the Gospel as has been reproduced in a living form in your experience, is what the world needs more than almost anything else.

Are there none who have had many and many years of struggle, who have become veterans, and who could bear a testimony as to what God's grace has enabled them to do with fundamental faults of character? There are men who begin their Christian life when they are young, and who, during all the early part of it do not wish to say anything about their temper, which is fiery and ill-controlled, but who, after forty or fifty years, have got such control of it that they can manage it, and are satisfied that they have achieved a victory. And there is no Waterloo like that. Any man who has humbled his pride by the power of God's truth and God's spirit; any man who has put down his

temper; any man who has overcome his avarice; any man who can say, "I was growing up penurious, getting all I could, and trying to keep what I got, but I am becoming more generous by the grace of God; it was not natural to me, I began reluctantly, and learned slowly; but I have come to a knowledge of it at last"—any such man has a testimony to bear which the world cannot well afford to do without.

Christian brethren, these victories over constitutional faults are the true victories, after all. And there is not enough made of them. The young are not enough encouraged by them. Struggling men are not taught by them as they should be. A large experimental knowledge of these things is a most precious depository of truth. These instances are sufficient to suggest, in various directions, other parallel or analagous instances. And let me say, in closing, that no church can be prospered in which all the ministration comes from the pulpit. The pulpit was never meant to be a substitute for the living experience of the church. The power of the pulpit, generally speaking, consists in one of two things—either in steering by the actual life of the church, or else in reporting it as the subject matter of its own discourse. It is the power of God's grace in actual life that is efficacious in this world. And one great trouble with doctrinal preaching is not that it is wrong to preach doctrine, but that men preach only doctrinally. They do not let their doctrines bear fruit. They do not carry them forward to the point of application in actual experience. They do not resolve the principle into the concrete experience. That is the fault with what is called *high doctrinal preaching.*

In the next place, in familiar church meetings there is not enough declaration and conversation in respect to the Grace of God in your experience. You know that prayer meetings are proverbially dry and stiff. Men test their consciences by their faithfulness in attending prayer-meetings, and take great credit to themselves when they can say, "I go to the prayer meeting every week"—as much as to say that a man who can do that can do anything, on principle. And I sometimes think it is correct. Men go to prayer-meeting, often, in a room that is big enough to hold four times as many as come together; and each, one would suppose, suspecting the others of some infectious disease, sits as far from them as he can: and they sing a hymn coldly; then they read a section of the Bible (if the Word of God is the bread of life, they take a very dry crust out of it); then they have a prayer, perfunctorily made; then there is another hymn; then there is another regulation prayer; and then the meeting is "thrown open." For a while nobody speaks. Then somebody gets up and says the same thing that he said two weeks ago—that they are all sinners; that they are all living below their light and priviledge; and that they ought to feel

roused up and quickened to a sense of their duty. He sits down, and another man balances it on the other side. He is an elder, or a deacon, or some other regular speaker; and what he says is all good—they know it is, for they have heard it a thousand times. And when he sits down the hour has elapsed, and everybody thanks God that it has. And the meeting is dismissed, and they all go home. I really believe that prayer-meetings of churches are often the most waste periods of the whole week. And the most melancholy part of it is, that those men who are so unspeakably dry, have rich fountains of experience in them. They are really good men. That old elder who got up and repeated for the five-hundreth time, perhaps, that ritualistic speech, or uttered that stereotyped prayer, is as sweet, and as gentle, and as simple as a child. He is a man of purity. And if, in prayer-meetings, men only knew enough to talk about the things that are in them, and not about things that it is "proper" to talk about; if they would let out something of themselves, it would seem like a Pentecost there.

I have seen one of those stiff meetings seized by an old sailor that had dropped in, who did not know what was "proper," and who, when he had listened to these dry speeches until he could endure it no longer, got up and let himself out in true Methodist style. Tears ran down his cheeks, and his voice was lifted up, and filled the whole room, and thrilled the hearts of all present. Although he used much bad grammar, there was a great deal of good sense in what he said. And at such a time I have seen people cry, and little children wake up, and look about and wonder what was happening. They had never heard of such a thing in a meeting before. And it was owing to nothing in the world but the fact that there was a man there with a fresh heart, who was not ashamed to say just what he felt, without thinking of grammar, or propriety, or what special thing he should say, but relating his own experience, and pouring out his little gospel in an earnest, simple manner. It was the best meeting that the people had ever had, and they were delighted, and they got the man to come to the next meeting, and tried to get him to speak again as he did at the previous one; but they were disappointed. The moment you attempt to run two meetings in the same mould, the second one will be a failure. A meeting to be successful must be under God's hand, and must follow its own sweet will, and develop itself according to the providence that prevails at the time. If men understood this, and would speak of things that they do know, and would testify to things that they have seen and felt, with simplicity, not caring for anything except to honor God and help their fellow men, what a different place a prayer-meeting would be! Is there anything sweeter than Christian experience?

Do not you know that the last thing which rises on milk is the

dairy is cream? It is about so with prayer meetings. The first part is apt to be milk, and the last part cream. By the *last part*, I mean the time after the meeting is dismissed, when the people get up off from the benches and chairs, and come together in little knots, and become so interested in talking over their experiences that it is almost impossible to get them out of the room. Then there is just that which the whole meeting ought to have been made up of.

This subject shows what Christian converse should be. I know there is a great deal said about talking with one another. My own impression is that a great deal of what is called Christian talk or conversation is quite profitless. I feel it to be an impertinence when a man whom I do not specially know, and who does not specially know me, comes up to me and says, in a regular stereotyped way, "Well, brother, how is it with your soul to-day? What are your hopes?" Although I am a minister, and a very *proper* man, yet I cannot make a peaceable answer to such an interrogation as that. It would tempt any one to deride the man, though not to deride religion.

Neighbors should talk with neighbors, and acquaintances should talk with acquaintances. And if you talk with strangers it should be with deference to their feelings. It should be with a consciousness that you are invading their personality. You should honor them while you speak to them. You are not God's lords over other men. You have no right, because you are a pardoned sinner, to approach an unpardoned one in an arrogant or over familiar way. Your business is to make men feel the sweetness which there is in religion. And if you talk of some real experience of your own, you will not be likely to go amiss.

For instance, while crossing the ferry, a brother comes up to you, and says, "I suppose you heard of the transaction I was engaged in yesterday?" "The transaction that you were engaged in? What was it?" "Well, you know, I was left to myself, and I was grasping, and, I admit, I made demands that I ought not to have made. I felt sorry about it afterwards. When I got home I told my wife about it, and she said she thought I had been grasping, and had not acted Christianly. And I am going over this morning to acknowledge to that brother that I did wrong, and tell him that he shall have it just as he wanted it." Perhaps you have been engaged in just such a transaction, but you do not make any confession of it. You say to yourself (this is the way the devil makes you talk), "I will not let him know it: if I do he will think I am no better than he is." But suppose you should say, "I have gone through that experience, too?" And suppose you should go on and tell him how you had been avaricious and grasping, and how you had been brought to realize your fault, and how you had overcome

it, do you not think it would be a comfort and consolation to him? There is great benefit to be derived from this comparing notes one with another.

When two men that have been sick for a great while come together, the time is not long enough for them to tell of all the diseases and sores that they have suffered from; of all the doctors that they have had; of all the doses that they have taken; of all the disgustful experiences that they have gone through. A little of that would do; but if you would talk of your failures; if you would relate your real experience in business life, this would be a Christian conversation that would cheer and comfort you.

My dear brethren, we do not bear witness to Christ's work in us half as much as we ought to. Every day, and everywhere, he is with us. It is by the grace of God that we are what we are—that you are what you are, and that I am what I am—in all that is good. He is not far from any of us. He is near to comfort you, and to inspire you with courage, and to press you forward in the Christian life. At home you are still with the Lord. He follows you out from home into your business. Where care and temptation are, there is rescue. Where suffering and sorrow are, there is comfort. Where darkness comes, there comes illumination. Where discouragement comes, there come instruction and hope. Your life is enveloped in a perpetual atmosphere of divine guardianship. And how much of all this wondrous experience of the dealing of God with your soul are you using for other people's instruction, to incite and encourage them?

When you go home to glory in the other land, and in music chant God's goodness to you, nothing will seem more wonderful to you than your own experience, except the mercy of God that delivered you by reason of it; and shall you delay until that glorious hour, all recognition of this living work of God in your soul?

I say to you, as Jesus said to the man, *Go to thy friends and tell them what the Lord hath done for thee, and that he hath had compassion on thee.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

Lord Jesus, again lay thy hands upon the heads of little children, and bless them. Again rebuke those among us who do not believe that God takes care of children, and who leave them to be swayed hither and thither by the impulses of their nature, until they have grown to man's estate, and think that then only are they able to ripen into piety. Teach us all to rear our children in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord, so that their first thoughts shall be instructed toward God, and their first feeling taught to follow in the way of Christ and Christian love. May we have faith to believe that thy grace can reach to the very cradle. May we have faith to believe that thy holy spirit can change infant hearts. If, when rugged temptations and violent sins, and all the passions of life, have gnarled and distorted the disposition, thou canst change men, and make them gentle, and pure, and true, how much easier canst thou change the young before perversion has been followed by settled habits! May we look more and more to the sanctuary of home, and to the gospel of mothers' lips, and to the early instruction of our children, and to that life which shall begin with its roots in sacred love. And grant that thy church may be nourished by men who shall grow up, from the very beginning, in true holiness, that in the nurture and admonition of the Lord whole generations may be brought up.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those parents who are seeking to rear their children aright. Let not their faith fail. And if they seem, in later years, to swerve and go aside from the right way, may they have faith to bring them back again—a faith that will not let them go; a faith that trusts in the word of the Lord, that they shall not depart utterly from the way of their instruction.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all the labors of those who seek to rear the young to a nobler life: to manliness, in honor and in Christian piety.

Grant, we pray thee, that thy kingdom may be established in the hearts of all those who are gathered into our Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes; and in the hearts of all the young that are in our households; and in the hearts of all the young that are not at home, and that have no friends, and that are strangers among strangers, and are subject to all the mischiefs of temptation, and all the troubles and trials of sin.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thy truth may be mighty upon the hearts of all. May the hearts of the parents be turned to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents. Grant that there may be in Christ Jesus more holy love, more pervasive purity, more earnest faith, more truth speaking, and more fidelity, in all the relations of life.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt bless us this morning as we are gathered together, so many from so many ways, with such different histories, and with experiences that to each one are more than all the world. Who can tell his own life? What word can interpret the inward life? But we are all open before thee; and that which is even to ourselves intricate and mysterious in our own nature and experience is perfectly plain to thee.

Bless us according to thy sight, and according to thy mercy, and not according to the wisdom of our asking. Grant, we pray thee, that every one in thy presence may feel that God is near to him for good. Open to thy people, by faith, the sense of thy nearness and of thy blessedness, in mercy. Grant that they may be able, this morning, to take hold of thy promises with renewed faith; that they may look up to thee with renewed confidence, and feel, indeed, that they are brought into the very banqueting hall of the king. May they touch, not the hem of thy garment alone: may they, with

* Immediately following the baptism of children.

the disciple of old, be able to lay their head in thy bosom. We pray that thou wilt also speak comfortable things to those who have heard what is the greatness of thy power and glory, but wist not what to think. Grant that there may be some consolation to such to-day. Grant that unconverted souls may be touched with divine fervor, and brought into seriousness and earnest consideration of their way.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt look upon all who have wandered. Lord, most merciful, and long-suffering! how long dost thou bear with those who sin against thee! How wonderful is that mercy by which thou dost call them back again, and make all promises to them if they will but cling to thee! If there be any in thy presence, to-day, who are soiled and stained with sin, and who have wandered far away from God, oh! let them hear the voice of invitation, the pleadings of mercy, and the promises of hope and of success. And by the Holy Ghost may there be kindled in such hearts a light that will burn brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

And we pray that thou wilt bless those who labor for the outcast, and for the forsaken, and for the neglected, and for the ignorant. Lord, love them, and fill their souls with love, that they may go to their work, from day-to-day, with fresh unction, with new power from on high. We thank thee that within the hearts of thy servants thy words have not died, but that thou art raising up many in our midst who are laboring for Christ, and professing his name, and preaching him to those around about them; and that thy spirit follows their labor; and that there are many awakened and converted; and that the voice of those who rejoice is heard in many a family. Thou art reconstructing desolate places. Thou art bringing back wanderers. Thou art restoring wicked men to righteousness. Thou art fulfilling the prayers of parents, long dead, toward their recreant and sinning children. Thou art glorifying thyself in many a place. And in the day of final glory and final exhibition, thou wilt show forth what thou art doing for the hearts of men.

We thank thee, O Lord our God! for that arm of power, unshriveled, unwithered, stretched out yet; and for that great fountain-heart of mercy which bears thoughts more numerous than the drops of morning dew, upon all that are perishing in need. And we pray that thou wilt still speed thy work. Still may thy people rejoice in the Lord, and rejoice in the labors of the Lord. And may they go forth sowing precious seed. Though they sow and wet the seed with tears, may they remember that they shall come again ere long with their bosoms filled with sheaves.

And grant, we pray thee, that thy truth may everywhere prevail over error. May men learn truth through love. May they learn to bear with one another, and to forbear. May thy different churches no longer vex each other. May each, according to its light, labor for the welfare of men, and for the glory of God. And grant, we pray thee, that all of them may be drawn more and more into the blessed spirit of unity, of common faith, and common hope.

Let thy kingdom come in all the world, and fill the whole earth with thy glory.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

DESIRING AND CHOOSING.

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."—HEB. XI. 25.

This is a part of that discourse of faith which was illustrated by all the historical instances which were then within the reach of the apostle, and in which were passed in review the greatest names of Hebrew antiquity, the element of faith in each being brought out. And in that whole group of noble souls, though living in the dusk of the earliest day, there was none greater than Moses, of whom this was spoken. Great, he was, by the native stature of his mind—one of the few pre-eminently great minds; one of the four or five men of the world's history, as a leader, as an organizer, as a legislator, as a hero.

His circumstances, you will recollect, were peculiar. Born of a despised race, that then were in captivity in Egypt; doomed to destruction; saved by the shrewdness and love of his mother; adopted, by a most romantic incident, into the family of the reigning house; reared as a prince; educated to the last degree of knowledge that then was attainable; with a mind peculiarly fitted to take on education, he stood apparently upon the threshold of all the things that men most desire in this world. There was nothing that wealth could give that the child of Pharaoh's daughter could not have. There was nothing in position, and nothing in honor, and nothing in government, that was not open to his hand. There was nothing in pleasure that was not accessible to him. Or, if he chose, he could turn aside to "the mysteries," as science and knowledge were then called. Though knowledge was the prerogative of the few—namely, the highest class—yet he belonged to it, and knowledge was his.

Now, under such circumstances, the sense of righteousness, the sense of justice and equity, and the prospect of the future, were more to him than all the treasures of Egypt. And although he would have, if he chose his own people, to ally himself with all that was despicable in slaves; although he would have to bear, at their hands, the utmost indignities; although he was to be a vagabond, driven out; although when the pressure of the government came upon him it would be enough to destroy a score of men; and although he was to wear out

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eighty most laborious years (and being a prophet all this rose up before him)—yet he chose it. That is to say, he *desired* it, he *sought* it, and he *had* it. And so illustrious an instance of choosing you scarcely can select anywhere else, now that we see the whole of it in perspective.

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ [showing that Christ was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and that he was worshipped in the Old Testament dispensation just as we worship him now, though under the national designation of *God*] greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he hath respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Afar off he beheld the ends and final issues, and chose them: and all the circumstances intermediate he accepted as the condition on which he was to receive the fruition of the final reward.

I propose to discourse, to-night, on the *Difference between Desiring and Choosing*; because there are a great many who are snared at that point, and because if we can separate the real nature of choice from all its incidents and accidents, there are some applications that can be made which will be of very great value to those who are honest, and who mean to follow their best light.

Of all the things that have been made in this world, there is nothing so susceptible as man. We are more accustomed to speak of man as a creature of power, producing effects, than in any other way; but if one will narrowly study himself and his fellows, I think he will be still more surprised at their susceptibility to receive impressions.

When we hold a mirror up before any object, it takes instantly both the form and the hue of that object: but it is without any power to change. It is the same mirror, and is unsusceptible to anything but the reflection of the objects that are presented to it.

There are some thirty or forty separate mirrors in the human mind —for every faculty is, as it were, a mirror held up to some side of nature, no one of them taking in everything, but each one of them being adapted to some corresponding element in the great round of creation. There is all that cluster of faculties which we call *the reason*, or *the understanding*, made up of severalties, each particular element of which represents, or stands over against, a line of truth, and is susceptible to it. And all the reason is susceptible to all the kinds of truth which exist in the earth, whether physical, or social, or moral.

Then there are the moral sentiments, of their several kinds, each one of which, as a separate interpreting mirror, throwing away every thing else, selects to itself some particular sphere of truth—the con-

sciene, moral truth; hope, its particular kinds of truth; love, its sorts of truth; beneficence, its varieties of truth.

So, through the whole line, each one of the different faculties—*the susceptibilities*, as they are sometimes called—stands, as it were, over against a province of influences or truths. And it is not for man to determine whether he will be influenced by them or not. He cannot help himself. It is not for me, opening my eye upon color, to say, "I will not perceive color." I cannot help perceiving color. It is not for me, in the presence of sweet music, to say, "I will not be affected by sweet music." It takes care of itself. It affects me without my will. You are so susceptible, and I am so susceptible, that, certain influences being set in motion upon us, there is a side of us on which they strike. And this susceptibility, when it is carried up a certain way, is called *desire*. It culminates in a state in which you begin to want that which comes pleasantly or favorably upon the mind.

Here is an agent created with wondrous subtlety, and put together in a manner extraordinary, as to itself—the body, the mechanism of the physical organization, in all the animated creation. For, although single animals have specialties which surpass man, there is not in the animal kingdom any organization which, in its sum total, is to be compared with man. We cannot fly as the eagle can; but the eagle cannot manipulate as we can. We cannot strike as the lion can; but the lion cannot carve and draw as we can. We are feebler in some things in order to be stronger in others; but the average is transcendently greater in man than in the animal creation. The physical organization is as inferior to the mind, as a casket is to the jewels which it carries. It is the mind, after all, that, being studied, is the most subtle, the richest and the most extraordinary, of all the things which a man can contemplate in this world.

It is no small thing to carry this mind in the midst of God's outward creation—in the glory of the heavens, and the glory of the earth; in fullness of the summers; in the endless variety of things that address themselves to each of the senses, and, through observation or reflection, to the taste and desire. It is a marvellous pilgrimage that a man makes, with such a susceptible mind as his, through the natural kingdom. But in society, all the combinations which men make among themselves, into neighborhoods, or into parties, or into schools, or into philosophies, or into social circles, or into bodies formed for the carrying out of ambitious designs—these things acting upon a sentient human mind, tend to create in it susceptibility and desire past all enumeration. It is no small thing to carry our minds, so sensitive, in the midst of all things that are desirable in life—its praises, its joys, its loves, its tastes, in endless profusion.

In the midst of all the things which address themselves to the eye, and to the ear, and to the tongue, and to the hand, and to the body, in the midst of all the priceless possessions for which men have striven since the earth began—one of the first truths that man finds out, is that he is not large enough to do everything; that every one has to live on a principle of selection. But a principle of selection is a principle of rejection. No man can ever appropriate all the bounties of creation which come providentially within his reach. There is not vitality enough in a man to supply all the faculties, all the time, with the sensibility which enjoyment implies. I have put that to proof.

In traveling abroad, in going through Switzerland, in visiting galleries, in seeking out those rarities of which I had read, and about which I knew much, but which I had never beheld, with good health and pleasing society, I went from day-to-day to the maximum of possibility. I enjoyed until there was no more power in me to enjoy, and stopped long before the sun went down, simply because I was used up. I could carry a pretty good load, for a while; but I frequently had a realizing sense that there was a definite limit to the capacity of a man to carry things, even when they were accessible to him. You may look until your eye ceases to see what you look upon. You may listen until your ear fails to hear the sounds which fall upon it. You may enjoy until the fibre says, "I cannot vibrate any more." And a man thanks sleep at last, as the unnamed and unknown luxury of luxuries.

So it comes to pass that with this susceptibility running through many faculties, the mind is not large enough nor strong enough even to take in everything that is accessible to it. There are many joys which belong to later stages than the present one in which you stand. They come in regular succession; they are articulated in the way of cause and effect; and if you are to have them, you are to have them just as you have clusters of grapes. First the seed is obtained and planted in the ground. Then it goes through the various periods of maturation. And you cannot anticipate or antecede this regular sequence of development. So it is in human life. There are many things which men, when they hear about them, desire. They want them, but have not got them.

In the first place, there are many things that are at opposite poles, so that if you have some things, you must give other things up. If a man wants to sleep, and wants to be wide awake at the same time, he must choose. He cannot do both—(out of Church!) It is impossible for a man to be asleep, and also to be attentive to what is going on out of sleep.

All through life it is so. Everywhere men choose, and in choosing always refuse or deny themselves what they desire. They desire one

thing more than another, and are obliged to make a selection. Selection on one side, as I have said, always implies rejection on the other side.

A man may desire all his grounds to be in forest, and at the same time he may desire all his grounds to be arable, so that he can plow and plant. He can have them either way; or, he can put a part under the plow, and a part in forest: but he cannot have them all in forest and all under the plow, at the same time. Though each way may have its advantages, and may be right, he cannot have them both. You can take one or the other, or a part of one, and a part of the other. And there is where choosing comes in. The desire is, "I would like them all forest, and I would like them all field," but you cannot have them all one and the other at the same time. You must choose; and so you must find out which you desire most, or which, desiring most, you will choose, and take steps to secure.

A man may desire to go to sea, and if he has ever been there, I think he will desire still more to stay on shore; but he cannot do both. If you select one element you reject another, all the way through life.

I make these familiar illustrations to show that in the selection which desire begins to breed in us, we are obliged to take things here or reject things there, because they stand opposed to each other; because they stand in conflict; because they stand in succession. So that if you begin at any one point, and say, "I desire that thing," that thing is only to be reached by given steps. It is not on your level. If you would have it you must ascend. If you desire it enough to take the steps to get to it, then you chose it; but if you do not desire it enough to take the steps to get to it, you do not choose it.

From this brief and familiar exposition of *desiring* you will perhaps make the transition yourself into choosing, out of desire.

I take a little child by the hand, and walk down the street to a shop window, and that child wants the first gay thing it sees, and then it wants the next one, and the next, and the next. It wants them all, and would try to take them all, if it could. I take the child into the shop, and it wants a wheelbarrow, it wants a doll, it wants dresses for the doll, it wants this, that, and the other thing, until its little arms are quite outspanned by the multitude of things that it has, and it cries because it cannot take home everything in the shop. As the child gets a little older, he says, "I want this, and I want this, and I want this;" but the parent says, "Take your choice, my dear. Which will you have?" The child looks wistfully at all the things, and wishes it could have them all; but as it cannot have them all, it finally chooses this; and the selection being made, he gets, and does not get, as the case may be.

When people are still older, the same thing is true. A woman goes out shopping, and wants to procure material for a dress. And oh! to go to that place of bewilderment, Stewart's! You wish to select a comfortable dress, a dress within your means, a dress answering to your circumstances. But oh, that the loom should have made such a provocation to the eyes! There it hangs, oh, so gorgeous! oh, so exquisite! "That is what I want," you say; "but this is what I am going to buy;" and there is a vast problem in that simple expression. You want that; and why do you not buy it? "In the first place, it is beyond my means. I have not the money to pay ten dollars a yard for that, or I would do it in a minute." Have not got it? Why, do you not own twenty times ten dollars? "Oh, yes, I own that amount; but then, I have got to pay it for other things." In other words, you prefer to spend your money for other things. You desire that dress; but all things considered, it is better that you should not pay ten dollars a yard for twenty yards of dress goods. You prefer to pay your rent, or to distribute the money among your children, for their education. You think that on the whole you will get more comfort out of that money if you dispose of it in that way. In other words, though you want the costly dress, you do not feel justified in getting it.

The love of dress is pitiful; but the hunger of the eye is not to be despised. There are other kinds of hunger besides stomachic hunger. Great numbers of people have a love of beauty; and many poor wretches are starving because they have it not, and do not know where to look for it. I pity people who have starvation of the eye.

I remember very well the bleak and barren rooms that I used to live in. I did not know what ailed me. I could not then tell what I wanted: I know now. It was some æsthetic beauty that I had not, and could not find anywhere.

And there are many people who are damned because they have this appetite for beauty, and do not know how to gratify it properly, and, for the sake of having dress, of having ornaments, of having something pretty to them and attractive to others, sell body and soul, and perish, soul and body!

It is a piteous thing for persons to have such an appetite and have it starved, until they have lost conscience, or ignorantly destroyed themselves, for the sake of it.

Well, now, while you were looking at this exquisite silk, and admiring it, did you *choose* it? No, but you *desired* it. You said, "I want it, but I can not conveniently pay for it, considering the other things that I ought to buy. When I think of the necessities of my husband and my children; when I think of what I must have to keep soul and body together; when I think of the house-rent, and the school bills,

and grocer's bills that are to be paid, I do not feel that I can afford to purchase so expensive a dress as that; and I *choose* not to have it, though I *desire* to have it."

There is no mystery in that. It is a problem that is coming up over and over again every day in persons' lives in this world.

What, then, is it, that a person does when he chooses? Why is it that he sifts the myriad influences that are exerted upon him, appropriating some and rejecting others? There are a thousand things that come in to-day, and there are a thousand things that come in to-morrow, to affect us. Each hour shifts the glass. The world, like a glass, is perpetually turning. We are all the time seeing different combinations. And we learn instinctively to choose from among the things that rise up before us. We have taken the line of our life, and we say, "All that I have must lie parallel with that line. I can not take this or that at pleasure." And our life is a system of selecting and rejecting. In looking around we put our eye on this, or on that, and choose it; and then we follow up that which we have chosen. A desire which is so much a desire that the reason, when it is true to its function, approves it as rational, and that the will applies the means to the end, and that you prefer it, together with all the circumstances which are required for getting it—that is a choice.

Choosing takes, not the thing alone, but the whole apparatus by which it is to be obtained. Choosing is not only desire, but the machinery by which desire becomes reality. Choosing always carries with it something more potential than mere susceptibility. So that when a man says, "I choose such a thing," it is as if he said, "I think that thing to be not only desirable, but more desirable than other things that are inconsistent with it; and so much more desirable, that for its sake I will give them up, and will apply all the forces that are necessary to getting it." Such is choosing.

Now, take the case of Moses. There was the Court of Pharaoh. There was everything that could dazzle the senses; everything that could gratify self-love and self-indulgence. And doubtless these things had their weight with him. And on the other hand, there was in his nature a deep moral want; a sense of humanity, a sense of justice, a sense of truth, a sense of God—for "he endured as seeing him who is invisible." There were those two lines of life—the one, that was calculated to attract and gratify the senses; and the other, that was calculated to attract and gratify the moral nature. They hung balanced, doubtless, in his mind. It was with him, probably, as it is with every other man who comes to a great choice. He perpended, he oscillated, he finally made his choice, and he stuck to it heroically, as long as he

lived; and he will be forever more transcendently blessed in the kingdom of God's glory above.

We are called to make *choices* perpetually; and we must not confound them with *desires*.

With this general explanation, we may now proceed, with some profit, to various points of application.

1. There are a great many young men and young women who desire very much to be cultivated and educated. They have some genuine tastes. They take pleasure in the finer æsthetic elements. They desire to have an education. And if you were to ask them, "Do you choose to be educated?" they would say, "Certainly, I do choose to be educated." But no, they do not. They *desire* to be educated; but it is one of those desires which everybody is subject to. Myriads and myriads of desires we have which never ripen.

Have you ever noticed what a profusion of apple blossoms there are every spring, and how few apples there are that come from them? There are a million blossoms to a bushel of apples. Just so it is with desires and choices. Men have a million of desires to a bushel of choices. Among all the multitude of desires that men have, there is only here and there one that amounts to a choice.

So that when you say, "I choose to be educated," you are mistaken. You do not *choose* it; you *desire* it—that is all. You have sometimes thought to yourself, "How nice it would be if I could speak the modern languages!" but you did not choose to take the pains to learn the French and German and Spanish. You tried once or twice, and got stuck in the grammar the first thing, and gave up. You desired to be educated, and you put yourself in the hands of a teacher, to be taught the various branches of instruction; you placed yourself in circumstances favorable to learning; but you found that it required self-denial to be educated perfectly; and the moment you were brought to the test of giving up bodily ease, and self-indulgence, and the gay throng, to the drudgery of learning a little to-day, and a little to-morrow, and a little the next day, for weeks, and months, and years, for the sake of gaining an education, you did not choose it. When you saw what such a choice involved, you did not venture upon it. You preferred to put it off till to-morrow, or next week, or next month, or next year, and take the consequences. Your choice was, "Give me present pleasure; give me good prospects in this world; give me something to eat, and something to drink, and something to wear; give me a place where I shall be praised, and where I shall be honored, and I will let intelligence go, and I will pick up what little information I need to get through life with." And so it turns out to be nothing more than a fair dream which so many young persons have in early life, when they say, "I

will be a knowing man." They desire knowledge; but they choose ignorance, or only partial knowledge.

2. There is many a man who desires to be rich; but there are a great many men who do not desire to be rich. I am one of them. I know all about it. But it would not be safe to offer wealth to me. As long as I know that I am not going to have it, I not only do not desire it, but I do not even think about it. I certainly am not going to give my life to obtaining riches. A great many people are poor; they are foreordained to poverty; and they make their calling and election sure in poverty. They say they do not want riches. They despise riches. There is nothing like a wholesome despising of riches among men that cannot get them!

But there are men who do desire to be rich, and make up their minds that they are going to be rich—that is, they say they are, until they begin to find out what it costs. They come down to New York to get rich. It was riches that they talked about at home. That is what they coaxed and persuaded their father and mother to let them come to New York for. They did not want to labor on the farm all their life. They wanted to cut a swath in the world; and the way to do it was with riches.

"But oh! my son, it is such a place of temptation!" "Do you think, mother, that I am such a fool that I do not know enough to resist and overcome temptation?" And so he comes down to the city. He comes to *seek his fortune*, as the saying is. And the first step is to get a place. He gets a place. And when he gets a place, he gets companions. And they are gay fellows. They laugh at him and taunt him because he is so trim and prim and proper. His plain country clothes are as good as he can afford, and he has supposed that they were good enough; but he is laughed into getting finer ones. He must shed his *country skin*. He must do as Romans do, among Romans. And he is drawn into this, that, and the other extravagance. And then, he is not going to shut himself up like a worm in its little cocoon. He must go out and see folks. And there are some folks that ought never to be seen; or that, being seen, ought never to be seen twice. And though he came down to get rich, he cannot resist the temptation to indulge in pleasures; and he wants to be kind and sympathetic; and he is not going to be a niggard; and so he must spend a good deal of money; and if it is not in his own pocket, he finds it convenient to take it out of his master's till. He is called up. "John, you have been very inconstant of late. Unless your habits conform to the rules of the establishment, you will lose your place." And it is not a year before he has lost his place. What is the matter? He has been caught drinking, carousing, and gambling.

This is the young man that came down to the city to be rich; but the moment he found that gaining wealth required self-denial, painstaking industry and integrity; the moment he found that it required that a man should rebuff the tempters on the right and on the left, and hold himself steadily to his purpose, he did not choose riches. He chose self-indulgence; he chose the wine-cup; he chose pleasures; he chose companionship; he chose the present, and let the future take care of itself. And when he came down to that which he had chosen —pleasure and its outcome—he was bankrupt and destroyed.

Oh! the destructions that go on! Oh! the annual waste of the best blood! Why, if men should be carried on purpose, by the hand of the tyrant, to such shambles of execution as they go to of their own accord; if young men were to be put upon such racks as I see them voluntarily bring themselves to, it would be thought to be a most outrageous thing. Sometimes for days and days it seems as though I walked upon graves and in charnel houses. Am not I in the confidence of those who are in trouble? Do they not come to me as to a physician? And do I not see that multitudes of men are on the rack, that they have been there till their brains and their marrow are rotten, and that they have destroyed themselves? Do I not see young men who are wasted by the cup, and by the damnable house of pleasure, and by the strange woman's snare? And do I not know that there have come down, hundreds and thousands of them every year, young men, the sweetest-hearted, the truest in their original nature, and the best-intentioned? And did they choose fortune? Did they choose to be something? No, they only *desired* it. They did not *choose* it. And there is a great difference between desiring a thing and choosing a thing. A fool can *desire;* but it is a man that *chooses.*

3. There are a great many among you who choose, as you suppose, to so grow up that you shall have an established reputation, and the things which properly belong to a good character. But stop! Are you not using those two words interchangeably, as if they were the equivalents of each other? You want a good character, and you want a good reputation, but there is a great gulf between these two things. There is many a man that has a good character, but has comparatively little reputation. In the long run, and ordinarily, a man's reputation will be as his character is; but for a little while a man may have a bad character and a good reputation, or a good character and a bad reputation. And every young man ought to know exactly what it is that he wants. Is it a reputation that you want? Is life a drama? Are you actors? Do you want a tinselled costume? Or, is life an earnest thing; and do you want realities? There is many a man that wants to be thought wise; but do you want to *be* wise? There is many a

man that wants influence; but do you want *power?*—for influence is nothing but the shadow which power casts. There is many a man that wants to seem high; but do you want to *be* high?

Oh! see what a scrambling there is. See how many there are who think that if they can get their names in the newspapers; if they can get themselves represented in some striking picture or book that is to come out; if they can connect themselves with some little successful enterprise, and get a name for shrewdness; if they can dazzle the imaginations of men, and get folks to think this, that, or the other thing of them, they think they have something substantial; but nothing that a man has is substantial, unless it has roots in himself. All that in you which is simply the reflection of other people's thoughts about you, is a mere shadow; and it avails but little. What you *are* stands by you.

If you are mean, your reputation for generosity will not spare you long. If you are stingy, I do not care what your reputation is, you cannot be so munificent in giving away that the gaunt bones of your stinginess will not stick out. People who give for praise, get what they give for. They get their reward for a while. Our Master, in speaking of those who made long prayers, said, "Verily, they have their reward." Everything gets its reward. Every seed produces its own kind. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Where men seek to build up a reputation without any concern as to their character, it is but a very little time that they deceive anybody but their own selves. They do not deceive their fellow-men, nor God, nor the devil.

There are many men who come into life, and begin life, feeling that they desire to have an honorable name. They do *desire* it; but whether they *choose* it or not we can tell when we see how they act. If they are circumspect, vigilant, and self-denying; if they take a high standard; if they steadily press their way up; if they buffet every temptation; if they are really forming themselves on a high model, and are seeking for honor and glory, then we say that they have *chosen* such a name. Otherwise we say that they have merely *desired* it.

4. There are very many persons who desire the happiness which comes from well-doing; and they also desire clandestine enjoyment of evil-doing. My friends, there is nothing in this world which more men are mistaken about than the possibility of being wicked underhandedly, and having good on the top of it. You can make a loaf of cake very heavy, and coat it with sugar, and put ornaments on the top of it, so that it shall look admirable. That is the way many people undertake to make their lives—at the bottom heavy as dough, and on the top covered with sugar. There are men who want to be selfish, and yet want to seem to be benevolent. They want to be mean, and they want

to look and seem as though they were generous as a prince. You cannot do it. You cannot join those two things together.

There are a great many men who want to have a reputation for purity and virtue, while they play with their tongue in secret places. They think that secretiveness can cover out of sight what is disreputable. They think they can do God's work with one hand, and the devil's work with the other hand.

Suppose a man should establish a magazine for grinding charcoal in the first story of his house, while his books and pictures were in the next story. Do you suppose a man can grind charcoal down stairs, and keep things up stairs clean? The charcoal will not go up by the ton, but the impalpable dust will find its way up. The ever-industrious air will carry it thither. Some will go out at the door, some will go up through the windows, and some will get through the crevices, until by-and-by his fine engravings are all smutted, and his books are all grimed, and the ceilings are changing in color, and the man's face is turning from its natural hue. You cannot grind charcoal down-stairs and keep clean up-stairs. But many men are trying that which is just as impossible. Dirty dogs, they are. Miserable, filthy creatures, they are. Wicked, self-indulgent men, they are. They are men who would rather die than have their secret life turned inside out, so that folks could see it. They are men that are not so much afraid of the great day of judgment hereafter as of the great day of judgment now. They would not for all the world have the truth respecting themselves come out. And yet, they think they are moving in the most eminent sphere, that it is all quiet, and that nobody knows anything about it. There never was a greater mistake made than that. You cannot harmonize these two things. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." You cannot obey Christ and Belial. You may have two masters, or twenty, if they all stand in a line; but if one stands aside from another you cannot follow them all. You cannot go in opposite ways. You must choose between them, and take one or the other. And *desiring* is not *choosing*. When men are doing wrong, and they know it, and regret it, as they often do; when wrong puts them into this or that misalliance; when they are filled with shame—which is God's quickener of the conscience; when they come very near the verge of destruction, and are filled with fear; when they come to a sense of their danger, so that they desire to be free from their wickedness, they only *desire* it. They do not *choose* it. If they did choose it, they could break their bonds, and rise up and be free.

When, therefore, a man says, "I want to leave my courses," I wait and see whether he does or not. When a man says, "I want to be a better man; I want no longer to transgress the fundamental canons

of morality; I do not want to be employed in a wrong business, or in a wrong way of conducting a right business," I watch him to see whether it is so.

Ah! my friends, I dare say you *desire* reformation, but you do not *choose* it. You may just as well understand it. It is good for you to know precisely where you stand. Some of your fainter feelings do desire better things; but your stronger feelings take hold of wrong things, and cling to them.

5. Rising from the question of morality to that of spirituality, there are a great many persons, who, all their life long, have the impression that they should be Christians, and mean to be Christians, and hope they shall be. They say, "I respect religion." That plea is often used as an instrument of defence. There are many men who employ it when a clergyman comes along. They say, "I know I am not as good as I ought to be: I am aware that I am not a Christian; but I have the greatest respect for religion and the Church." Perhaps you would not respect the Church so much if you knew all about it—for it is your ignorance, frequently, that leads you to respect it, even as much as you do.

I talk with these persons, and say, "Do you not choose to be a good man?" "Yes; oh yes." "Do you not choose to repent?" "Yes." "And to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes." "To rise up into the spirit of communion with him." "Yes." "And to live by faith of Christ, and love to God and man?" "Yes." "And to purify your life with everything that is consistent with the divine will?" "Yes, it is eminently desirable," you say. This, then, is precisely the ground on which you stand: you have the moral sensibility to see that it is desirable, but you have not moral stamina enough to *choose* it.

You prefer the present. You prefer to act in the line of your habits. And there are a great many of you who act against your best impulses. There are men here who believe in conscience, and rectitude, and honor, and acknowledge God to be their Commander and Captain; and yet they do not hesitate to break their promises to him, and violate their duty toward him. Multitudes of men there are, who, toward the divine Being are living in the most open violation of that which toward their fellow men they hold and cherish with their utmost sensibility.

How many, to-night, if I should say, "Do not you desire to be a Christian?" would not say, "Yes, I do desire it." Have you chosen it? are you willing to live for the things that it is necessary to live for? Are you willing to take the steps that it is necessary to take, are you willing to put forth the exertions that must be put forth, if you

are to be a true Christian? It is not enough for you to stand aloof and say, "Oh! that I were only as good a Christian as I think my father was!" It is not enough for you to sit in the gallery and look wistfully down and see the elements of Christ's body broken, and distributed among the people of God, and say, "I would give all the world to be among those persons." No, you would not. There is one little thing in this world that you would not give, and that is your *heart*. I like to see persons up in the gallery during the administration of the Lord's Supper, but I do not like to see them there too often. Stay on communion Sundays, and look at the solemn service, and let it sink deep into your heart; but oh! if you have been stopping once, and twice and thrice, the next time you stop, it should be down below, with those that are partaking of these elements. But for you to come years, and years, and years, as spectators of these things—you know it is not right. You know that while you *desire* to be a Christian, you *choose* to be an enemy of God—a man of the world, without God and without hope.

I will not, with applications, pursue this subject further. I will, in closing, make one or two remarks other than these.

The first is, that we see in the discriminations that have been made, and the illustrations that have been given, the explanation of a vast amount of religious susceptibility which produces very little result in life. We see how it is that men in church are carried up by singing, by prayer, by the present effect of preaching upon their minds, to a point which looks as though it would certainly culminate in true piety, and that then they go home and are as they that look into a glass, and see forms, and then forget what manner of forms they were of. Nothing but susceptibility was exercised in them. There was no moral purpose formed. There was no choice reached. But they think that they are getting better; they flatter themselves that they are real growing Christians, and that they are coming nearer to the Christian life.

There are a great many men here who think that they are sinful out of church, and do not think they are Christians. They *know* they are not Christians; yet they feel that, on the whole, their moral sensibility to some sides of religious influence is increasing. They have a vague impression that they are accumulating treasure. I do not undertake to say that men are not benefitted in many respects under such circumstances. I have seen men that were not gathered in at one revival, but were at the next one; and I have seen persons that went on acquiring more and more susceptibility, and gathering more and more of religious influence, and yet were going further and further from anything like decisiveness of choice, and contenting themselves with what amounted to nothing more than religious revery. They were persons

who took pleasure in thinking vaguely, and thinking at large, on the subject of religion; but they never got further than that. They never came to a decision or choice. And so there are hundreds that go on through life, like the clouds that do not rain in summer. They gather, and promise a shower, and then break, and pass away, and there is not a drop that falls.

I remark, again, that a man's choice may always be known by what he does, rather than by what he says. Therefore let me see what a man's life is, and I know what his choice has been. Whatever a man is, he chose to be—I mean within the bounds of possibility. A man may be poor, and may not be able to change his condition. A man may be short of stature, and not be able to add one cubit to it. But in the department of men's choices, what a man is, is determined by what he does. If you drink, you choose to drink. If you swear, you choose to swear. If you lie, you choose to lie. If you are hard-hearted, you choose to be hard-hearted. If you oppose the ways of virtue, you choose to oppose the ways of virtue. You choose the thing that you do. If, on the whole, you are manly and true, you choose manliness and truth. It is well for a man to analyze his life, to journalize it, to write it down, and let it lie before him. He can then draw his own portrait. This is the more important, because men purposely deceive themselves, and hide from themselves their real preferences and their strongest tendencies.

I remark, once more, that the power of desire increases, and the power of choosing decreases, as men go on through the stages of an unregenerate and wicked life. It is the reverse in a holy life. The power of forming desires into choices increases as a man advances in the Christian life. Whatever he desires within the bounds of possibility he can seek after, and gain, and keep. In the case of men who live out of Christ and out of religion, the opposite takes place. Their desires augment, but their power to choose diminishes. And the want of power to choose is the destruction of thousands, and thousands, and thousands. It is the will-power which men need; it is this central stamina that enables one to choose; and they have enfeebled and wasted it. So that one of the final mischiefs of wickedness in this world, is, that men become *reprobate*. Some persons are opposed to that word; but there is such a thing as a man's going on and perverting himself to so great an extent, morally, that there is not within his reach the means of recuperation. Can you tamper with the eye until you have destroyed its organization? Can you tamper with the tongue, till it ceases to perform its legitimate functions? Can you tamper with the physical structure, till it is unfitted for the offices which it was designed to fulfill? Can you tamper with the intellectual structure till it is all

awry, and reports falsely? So a man can tamper with his tastes, and his affections, and his sensibilities, till they cease to have their normal action. There is many a man that goes on drinking, although he abhors the ditch into which he has fallen. There is many a poor drunken man who covets respectability in those hours when the illusion is dispelled, and there comes a little calm. There are hours in which he bethinks himself again of his earlier and happier days. And I believe that the bitterest prayers which ever go to heaven, are prayers of poor drunkards, in their intervals of remorse for the past, and longing for the future. Why, then, do they not break away from the cup? Because the power of choice is destroyed in them, almost—quite in some instances. For I believe that drunkenness becomes a disease for which a man is totally irresponsible after a while. He has broken down the very mainspring of character. And in such stages as this he should be treated just as the insane are treated. He should be put into an asylum. He should be dealt with as we deal with little children, and those who cannot take care of themselves.

And as it is with intemperance, so it is with other wicked ways. They come to that point where desires are more powerful than choices; and men may go on in them till their power of choosing is shrunk to the minimum, if not entirely destroyed.

This subject is full, not only of instruction, but of warning. Better is the man who lives in a very narrow circle of ideas, but who has the power to form wishes into choices, than the man who lives in a larger experience, but has no power of turning his susceptibilities into preferences, and his preferences into choices. The benefits which you receive do not depend upon how much susceptibility you have, but upon your power to choose them. And if you would measure your manhood, and ascertain the steps along your future course; if you would form a prophecy concerning yourself, measure at that point where desires are converted into choices.

If you choose the life to come, all your present life will be subordinated to that glorious choice, and men will see, and angels will see, and God will see, that you are giving up the pleasures of sense, and of this life, that you may take hold of life eternal. But if you choose this world, with all its risks and perils, God will see, and angels will see, and all men will see, and you yourself will see, that whatever you may have wished, you *chose* the life that now is, and risked, if you did not choose, the destruction of your soul. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Take this lesson home with you. It is not in my power to convert you. It is not in my power to change you in any way. You must

change yourselves. And if it is difficult now, will it not be more so next year? If it is hard to-night, do not put it off, lest it be impossible next year, or in years to come. "Now is the accepted time." The difficulty to-day of turning from sin to holiness is the measure of the necessity—the *instant* necessity—for your doing so.

May God give you wisdom to emulate him of old, who *chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and had respect unto the recompense of the reward, and endured to the end, and was gloriously saved.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou blessed God, lifted up above all human calamity, above weakness, above thought of sorrow, thou art the most merciful and the most condescending. And all that we see among men of tenderness and of kindness is something of thee. Thou art the source of pity and compassion. With thee is mercy. It dwells with thee, and was born in thee. And all things that are to be desired in thought and in feeling are of God. We rejoice that there is not lifted into everlasting power any hard and compelling dynasty without pity. Thou that art eternal love dost dwell in the centre; and above all power is thy power; above all wisdom is thy wisdom; and everywhere, in heaven and upon earth, thou art moving all things toward beneficence. Thou art bringing all causes to work together for good. Thou art filling the earth, little by little, with righteousness. And though thy delay seems to us long, it is because our lives are short, whilst thou dost dwell in eternity, and to thee things move fast, though ages seem to intervene between the beginnings and the ends. And thou art content, and art pressing forward the grandeur and glory of thy kingdom. It shall yet open and grow more gloriously than we have dreamed. And we shall discern it. As aforetime, holy men desired to see, and died without the sight, so we, in the consummation of things, discerning the beginnings of the blossom and of the fruit, long to behold the millennial fullness, and shall not see it from earth; but in more glorious vision, with cleansed eyes, and clear and steadfast hearts, we shall behold, from the other side, the ends, and all the glories of immortality.

And now we desire to be on that side in the struggle. We, too, have our own battle. Every one of us has his contest to fight. Give to us brave hearts. Give to us firm purposes. May we meet every adversary undauntedly, and stand to our duty. We are thine. We belong to thee. May we be ashamed to withhold from our lawful Master his just due. And since thou art not Master as much as Father; since thou art Lover as well as Judge and Commander, grant that we may with more willingness and alacrity perform every duty to thee.

Lord, we beseech of thee that we may be faithful according to our light; according to our consciences. May we not put away the things which are unpleasant. May we give ourselves manfully, and with all our heart, to the right way, that we may walk therein, and continue therein, and that we

may draw others with us, until at last we shall stand in Zion and before God.

Oh! pity the infirm. Pity those that are wistful, but are not resolved. Pity those who look from afar, and wait for help, and find it not. Pity all those who, without thy power, and without human help inspired of thee, most miserably perish. Lord, gather them, we beseech of thee. Fill our hearts with earnest desire. May there be more and more who shall labor for men's souls. Behold how great is the waste. Things are perishing on every side; but nothing so much as man. What waste there is in all creation! But nowhere is waste so piteous, so needless, and so wide-spread as among men. Pluck them, we beseech of thee, from their dissipations, and from their intemperance, and from their lust for greed, and from their striving, and from cruelties, and from immoralities, and from dishonesties and frauds, from vanity, and conceit, and pride, from hard-heartedness and worldly-mindedness, from every iniquity. Bring them, we beseech of thee, into the sweet realm of purity and love, into fidelity and worship, that they may love God and love man, and be saved.

And we pray for the outpouring of thy Spirit in more copious effusion from church to church. Come forth, O Prince of the Soul! Know thine own, and call them with an effectual calling, and bring home many sons and daughters to thyself in this great city.

And we pray that thy word may be preached with more power and fidelity in all the churches of our land. Cleanse the morals of this people. Set up thy standard everywhere. And to its bright light may there come trooping innumerable souls. We pray that thou wilt overturn and overturn until he whose right it is shall come and reign.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, ever more. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the word of admonition and instruction. We pray that it may give light to the understanding, and warning to those who are in peril, and caution to us all. May we examine ourselves to know how much we are living upon merely a vague and profitless desire, and how much we are building ourselves up by choices. Grant that we may choose not only the name of Christ and his service, but his spirit; and every day more and more. And may we convert all our tastes and all our susceptibilities into those choices which shall make us men in Christ Jesus. Go with any who desire more knowledge and light. Open their understandings. Fill them with light by thy good Spirit. If there be any who are inquiring their way to thee, bring them to a knowledge of Christ Jesus. And we pray that there may be many born into the kingdom, and that all our places may be filled with the sons of those that are ransomed and rejoicing in the Lord. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

SPIRITUAL STUMBLING-BLOCKS.

"Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people."—Isa. LVII. 14.

In eastern lands it is, to this day, as it was from the beginning. Society has no life in itself, and is strong only through the government. Whatsoever, therefore, is for the common good, languishes. Roads, which are one of the distinguishing elements of civilization, were either wholly wanting, in olden times, and in oriental lands, or were mere paths. Whenever the king, or some great personage, would travel, couriers were dispatched in advance. The local chiefs were summoned, the people were drafted, and the road upon which the royal *cortege* was to pass was prepared for that special occasion. The holes were filled; the narrow places were widened; the rocks or fallen trees were taken away; the rough places were made smooth. This required both that much be added in some places, and much taken away in others—much "cutting and filling," in the language of modern engineering.

In the passage which I have selected, the cry goes forth, not in behalf of a conqueror, or a sovereign, but in behalf of God's people. They are the honored procession for which a road is to be prepared. "Cast up, cast up,"—that is, heap up, fill in—"prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people."

The figure, then, is striking. As royalty demanded for itself a smooth path, a road from which all dangers and obstructions were taken away, so a soul that is on its way to God has thrown over it, as it were, something of the sovereignity which it approaches, and a mysterious voice is heard, crying, "Clear the way! heap up! heap up! cast out the stumbling-stones."

The application of this passage to ourselves is obvious. Life is a road. But each man must know his own way. It is smooth to some. It is rough to others. Some travel on fast and surely. Others are hindered, stumbled, stopped. Some of you have gone on conciously and very far in the Christian life. Some of you have hardly moved beyond the point at which you began.

It may inspire you to enterprise, if I shall point out some of the obstacles which hinder the growth of men in their life as Christians.

Sunday Morning, April 3, 1870. Lesson: Isa. LVII. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 639, 660, 566.

To give a personal and spiritual application to this passage—*Cast up, cast up, remove the stumbling-blocks, the stumbling-stones*—I apprehend, in the first place, that the want of a true and large ideal of Christian life, as an inward spiritual and divine disposition, and the attempt to live in mere conformity to rules, and with a vague impression that if one conforms to the church he shall in some way, he knows scarcely how, be saved, is itself one of the causes of perpetual stumbling. The attempt to live merely for the fulfillment of social moralities; the attempt to live so that all the rules which are prescribed by all those who are governing in the Lord, shall be obeyed; the attempt to live upon any such low conception as that of regulations, conventions, observances, is sure to make the Christian life poor, and the travel uncertain. For *a new creature in Christ Jesus* is the apostolic definition of being a Christian. It is the endeavor to substitute for the worldly character a divine and spiritual one. The kingdom of God is to be within us. The evidences of it are to be hope, and joy, and faith, and love, and fidelity. And the aim of the true Christian life is not so much to keep its ordinances, or to believe in this or that disclosure of technical truth: it is larger manhood, patterned on Christ Jesus. It is to make yourself nobler, purer, sweeter, truer, more faithful, more heroic, and more worthy to look God in the face, and say, "I am thy son." We are exhorted to *live worthy of the vocation with which we are called;* and that vocation is son-ship in Christ Jesus. We are to live so that we shall feel worthy to say, "God is my Father, and I am his son."

Now, our aspiration and our effort will be in proportion to the dignity and the ideality, if I may so say, of our conception of what religion is. If we suppose it to be simply not doing evil, we shall put forth but very little exertion, and we shall receive but very little stimulus. We are not to pattern our religion on the Ten Commandments. I marvel to see them so much in vogue as they are yet—although the world needs them. The Ten Commandments, which were the common law for barbarians, but which do not at all epitomize Christian life, except by a stress and torture of construction which, if applied to the rest of the Scripture, would destroy it,—I marvel that men so stick to them. And yet I do not. There is so much stealing, and lying, and wickedness in the world, that I marvel that the Ten Commandments are not used a great deal more than they are. I marvel that, instead of being written merely in churches, they are not put up in the places where Christian men do their business. There is need of the Ten Commandments. However, a man might keep all these, and, like the good young man in the Gospel, do all the outward things required by the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet come short of fulfilling the demands of a true

spiritual religion. Our effort and our self-denial will be in proportion to the magnitude of the conception which we have of the life that is to be led. And if persons come into the Christian life with the impression that it is merely rubbing off little protuberances, or that it is merely acting in conformity with certain requirements of modern Christian societies, they will make slow progress, because there will be no motive to stimulate them to high endeavor and high development.

A *low ideal*, then, is one of the hindrances which men meet with in living a Christian life.

Next, the attempt to live a Christian life with a *low tone of feeling*, is a reason why men do not make greater progress. For, if there is one thing that is exacted more emphatically than any other, it is intensity of feeling. Not only are the great characteristic traits of Christian experience enjoined in the Bible, but the modes of exhibiting those traits is enjoined as well. In all the writings of the New Testament you will find that fervor, intensity, is required in every feeling. For, although our Master does not use the same language that the apostles do, he just as much teaches the necessity of this intensity, where he declares that it is not to be so high nor so inward that it cannot show itself; that it is to be a light which cannot be hid. Men never phosphoresce until they come to intensity of feeling. Men never glow and develop themselves so that every one shall know that they are Christians, unless they have had intense experiences. In other words, one might say that the peculiar fruits of the spirit are like tropical fruits, which cannot ripen without tropical heat.

We have moralities. I may compare them to the plants which grow in the ground, with roots in the dirt. And most excellent crops they are that grow so. But some of the fairest blossoming plants, some of the most beauteous flowers which we have on this platform from Sunday to Sunday, are such as these air-plants which we have here to-day. They have no roots. They fasten themselves upon a branch of a tree, and swing loose in the air, and feed by their leaves, and never touch the dirt; and yet they blossom freely almost all the season. And most fragrant are they. Christian graces are air-plants which do not need dirt to root in. Moralities are good crops—oats, wheat, and what not. Although they root in the dirt, they are very excellent indeed. But we need to have both. We not only need to have moralities, but we need to have Christian graces, which are, as it were, *orchids*, *epiphytes*, and fed upon higher and purer things—light, and moisture, and other elements that the air contains.

Now, none of these can thrive in our temperate climate. A temperate climate is good for temperate things; but for intensities it is not good. And many dominant and characteristic traits of Christian char-

acter are such as never can be brought out without fervor. Yet, how many men there are who are afraid of it, and who, seeing it, at once think, "It is fanaticism!" How many there are who quote, until it is worn out on their lips, "Let your moderation be known unto all men!" Where is it that men are afraid? and what is this moderation that they enjoin upon us? You will never hear such men enjoining moderation where it is *bargain.* You will never hear men, when talking to their children about seeking worldly gain, say to them, "Let your moderation be known." It is when the child is so desirous of going to meeting, and is so much interested in this or that charitable enterprise, and is so addicted to prayer, and so loves the assembly of God's people, and is so intensely kindled with feeling, that they almost fear, as they say, for his reason, and tell him, "Let your moderation be known." If that same child, grown older, or some other youth, under evil counsel, becomes vehemently addicted to business, every day filled with fiery motives for quick gains, does the father ever say to him, "Let your moderation be known?" Never. On the contrary, he looks upon him with undisguised admiration. He can scarcely keep from spoiling him with flattery. And he says, "If his life is spared, he has the making of a man in him." Every feeling and impulse in that child is worldly. He is full of greed for gain. He is intense and sharp in his secular nature. But there is no counsel of *moderation* from the father now. On the other hand, let one become intensely interested in the welfare of his fellows; let him night and day ponder as to how men shall be made better; let him give up his comfort for the sake of reclaiming men; let him be filled with "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs;" let him give himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, as if the invisible were real, and as if God were his, and men are alarmed, and say, "Let your moderation be known."

I would to God that there were more temptation to fanaticism than there is. I think fanaticism to be an evil; but it is an evil that *we* are not very liable to. Our temptation is the other way. And, in general, it seems to me that men do not enough mark the necessity of intense, fervent—continually fervent and intense—religious experience, to facilitate their courage along the royal road. If your feelings are right, do not be afraid of having them too deep. For, while the passions, while all the lower feelings, are apt to wear a man out by intensity, it is one of the peculiarities of the moral sentiments, that they nourish and feed men. Excitement in the higher realm of feeling does not wear men out. Hope, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost—men can go on feeding upon these experiences day in and day out, week in and week out, year in and year out. It is the passions that wear. It is the appetites that grind out the fibre of life.

Meanwhile, many who are well commenced in the Christian life, many whose faces are rightly set, many who have begun to walk in the royal road, fail from feebleness; from a want of intensity of Christian feeling.

Read, when you return home, to see whether these things be so. Read particularly the closing chapters of the various epistles of the apostles, and see in how many cases you will find the necessity for intensity of feeling repeated, and emphasized and re-emphasized.

I remark again, as one of the hindrances to growth in Christian life, *lack of deep and continuous devotion.* This is either from the want of a sense of the great spirit-world on whose border we live perpetually, or it is the result of excessive occupation, over-occupation, which crowds, all the time, and prevents one from ripening in a true Christian devotion. There is an utter liberty granted to everybody in respect to his mode of devotion; but there is no liberty as to whether he shall or shall not be devout, and worship from day-to-day. A flower might just as well attempt to get along in summer without the dew that falls upon it, as a Christian attempt to live without daily communion with God. An eagle that cannot fly; a nightingale that cannot sing; a vine that cannot bear grapes; a flower that cannot blossom—that is a heart that does not pray, and does not love to pray.

Why is it that there are so many whose prayers are formal; whose devotion is a duty, rather than an attraction, and a bewitching attraction at that? It is very largely, I think, because men know *God* rather than *Christ*. I do not mean that our prayers may not sometimes ascend unto God. I do not say that veneration may not seek for those peculiar developments of the divine nature which come to us through the eternal Father. But that for which the heart is hungry is companionship; and our companionship is to be with the Lord Jesus Christ; and our devotions will tend to become tender, and familiar, and nourishing, and companionable, if we are wonted to commune with Christ.

What is devotion? What is worship? If the young artist stands in the presence of his master, asking him of everything that pertains to the art which is common to them, recognizing the superiority of that artist master, revering him, and yet communing with him face to face, that is what we call devotion when the soul does it to God. This the soul may do toward the Father, if it is drawn thither. It may do this toward the Holy Spirit, if it is drawn in that direction, as some ideal natures—the mystics—are. It may do it toward the Lord Jesus Christ, if it needs the embodiment of God manifest in the flesh. Whoever draws near to God in the spirit of sincere, winning, loving, filial conversation, worships. This is prayer, this is communion, whatever may be the mode. Some shall pray by the lips of another; some shall pray

by their own lips; some shall pray in silence—without uttered thoughts; some shall pray at stated seasons; some shall pray only in circumstances that inspire peculiar feeling; some shall pray by written forms; and some without them. The range is large. The liberty is absolute. That which your experience teaches you to be best, you have a right to. But one thing is to be common. We are to pray. We are to *abound* in prayer.

Why is it, then, that there is so little of it? Why is it that those who have the privilege, and who have learned the language of prayer, so seldom or so ineffectually pray? My own impression is that no person prays to effect who does not pray till the heart and the imagination are touched. It is not until some such effect is produced upon us, that we really do pray. So short a time frequently is set apart for prayer, and so unprepared do men come into the presence of God, that by the time they have finished their devotions, they have scarcely become conscious of the reality of spiritual things. They leave off just when they should have begun. But till we feel the power of the world to come; till we feel that this suffocating and narrowing horizon has begun to open itself, and stretch out its circles, and that there is the touch of the infinite coming in upon the soul; till we begin to feel that we do see Him who is invisible—till these things take place, prayer is wasted. The most of that which is called *family prayer*, and *prayer in the closet*, is, I fear, only the husk of prayer, and not the true kernel, and does not feed the soul.

The want of devotion makes every effort at Christian life a burden. With devoutness, with the fiery elevations which come from devotion, with the realization of the great spiritual realm above us and around about us, a thousand things become easy. The heart that loves God, and goes to him in prayer finds things to be light which others find to be heavy. Duties are no longer duties, but they become volitions; and men do automatically what aforetime they did, if at all, imperfectly, by force. And there can be no eminent development of Christian life without this. It is the breath of the soul.

This takes hold, naturally, of another prominent need—namely, the abiding sense, in the Christian life, of God's presence. I mean by this, the art of carrying the suggestion of God through the realm of sense and secularity. There be many who seek their God in the closet. There should he be sought, and there should he be found; but no person can live in the full enjoyment of Christian faith who cannot carry God's conscious presence with him into the world, into his business, into his pleasures, everywhere. It is said of one of old, "He walked with God." That is, he lived with him. It is said of Moses, "He endured as seeing him who is invisible." That is the philosophical so-

lution of his wonderful success. It is said, "The pure in heart shall see God." It is said, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit"—*he that* ABIDETH *in me and I in him.*

There is a training by which every object of nature almost, and every evolution in society, will suggest the presence of God. It seems to me that men who invent symbols by which to suggest moral qualities and moral facts, are like persons who, by the side of the ocean, attempt to manufacture water to supply it. The great physical globe itself is one majestic system of symbolism indicating moral truths. The human mind is so formed in adjustment with the great physical, natural world, that if we are right with God, and rightly trained, every object in nature becomes suggestive of some moral quality, or some phenomenon in Christian life, or some spiritual truth or being. What is there that has not been appropriated and sanctified? The mountains; the cedars on them; the clouds above them; the birds in them; the fields below them; the brooks that flow from them; the rocks that compose them; the shadows which they cast; the refuge which they are in times of trouble and war; all events in the farming life; all processes in the industrial life of civilized nations; the sea; the summer; the winter; the house; the magistrate; the judge; the father; the animals upon the earth, and the fowls of the air; whatever there is all through nature—these things God has employed to convey to us some suggestion of the divine presence, and of divine truth. And no man can dwell in the conscious presence of God who has not the art of having the sense of God brought into him by some of the continually occurring events of life, or by some of the ever-existing realities of the physical world. He that can look up into the heaven at midday, and dwell long, and yet return his thoughts whence they came, without once having felt that God was there—I pity him. He that can look into the darkness of the night, and come back again to the light of his own countenance, and not have found God there—I pity him. He that can sit down upon a bank on which the sun shines moderately in the spring and watch the roots, and young insects, and all that nature is doing there, and not have one single thought of God—I pity him. He that can hear the sounds of the night, the voices of the sea, or feel the stillness; he that can look upon the face of a friend; he that can witness a marriage feast, or stand in the marble presence of death; he that can go anywhere, and not have the shadow of the eternal Throne cast upon him—I pity him. He that has to hunt for his God, and shuts his God up in a closet, and keeps a lock and key on him, and goes there to find him—I pity him. My God is everywhere. If I ascend up to heaven, he is there. If I go down and make my bed in hell, he is there. If I fly east, west, or any whither, he is there; and

he only can be considered a growing Christian who has the art of carrying him everywhere.

Another hindrance which men find on the road of progress in their Christian life, is their ignorance as to the effect of outward activity in developing inward fervor, and the effect of inward fervor in developing outward activity—as to the effect of the *reciprocal action of the inward and the outward life.* Men are accustomed to separate these qualities, which never should be disjoined. We ought to have strong feeling, and strong feeling ought always to take on the form of activity. Nothing is more unwholesome than strong feeling which gives itself no embodiment. That is the secret of the mischief which is done by fiction. Works of fiction are just as wholesome as anything else, if they are read wholesomely. But there is a principle which few understand—namely, that it is never healthy to excite strong emotions unless you give them a chance to commute themselves into deeds. All intense feeling ought to have the liberty of taking on some outward expression. If you excite a feeling, and deny the expression of it, it acts inwardly, and wastes and corrupts paralyzing the nerve out of which it has sprung. If, therefore, you read of heroic deeds, and your eye is suffused, and you shut up the book, and go back to the vulgarity of your every-day life without giving any other expression to this heroic excitement, it by-and-by lowers essentially the whole tone of capability in the soul. Whoever has pity, should do something to manifest pity. Whoever has love, should do something to show love. Commute high feeling into some form of action, and then it both blesses others and nourishes you; but mere emotion, without expression, is bad. And it is just as bad in the closet of the mystic as it is over the novel. There is many and many an unwritten novel. There is many and many a person to whom God gave the power of motive, and the production of feeling, and who has given himself up to what is called *meditation*, or holding one's self outside of life. All the power of his reason and imagination fill his soul full of beautiful thoughts and sweet feelings, but they remain thoughts and feelings, and never take on any other form of activity. And that is not well. It is one reason why persons are no better in monks' cells than out of them, or in caves than in houses. Simple meditations and fancies are not good for the soul, except as a change for a short time. The law of life is, *Feeling expressed*—feeling put into some form of activity befitting that feeling.

If, therefore, in your Christian experience, you worship God, if you love Christ, and if you would enter into the mystery of Christ's dying and atoning work, you must, when the feeling rises up, attempt to do the thing which the feeling itself indicates. You must become Christ to others in that real sense which was implied in the words of the

Saviour, when he told the disciples that if he, their Lord and Master, had washed their feet, they also ought to wash one another's feet. And so we commute into some form of positive activity whatever Christian experience or feeling we desire to have in the soul fresh, continuous, and harmless. I have known many and many a person that became very religiously selfish. I have known many and many a person that became so in sympathy with God, and spirituality, and ideality, that he had almost no sympathy with things as they actually are; that he cared very little to leaven life, and to benefit life.

But, on the other hand, it is just as important that actions should culminate in emotions, as that emotions should culminate in actions. It is not enough that a man should have a mere perpetual machine life. A man may be active in the Christian cause; he may disseminate tracts; he may attend meetings, and speak; he may organize, and work; he may do a great deal of good in various ways; and yet he may be imperfect in this, that his own soul is growing lean. He may become a mere factor in the spiritual realm.

Both of these things should play into each other. Men should be active that they may be emotive; and they should be emotive, that emotion may work into activity. And it is the want of this reciprocal influence of activity and emotion working together, that hinders many persons from rising into the higher moods of Christian life.

I may remark, again, that a very common hindrance to Christian development is the attempt of men to perform their Christian work outside of their appropriate spheres. There are a great many who feel that that is Christian work which is different from their common every-day duty. There may be something more than every-day duty which goes to constitute the whole of our Christian life—there ought to be; but, after all, every man's first duty as a Christian is in the calling in which God's providence has placed him. We are taught, and we feel, that our position in life is the result, not of accident or chance, but of the divine ordering. And whether God has ordered you to stand in the household or out of it, in the mine or on the ship, in the store or in the office, on the farm or in the shop, wherever he has placed you, there is your first duty. Your first duty is to subdue that business in which you are engaged, to the uses of religion. What I mean is, that it is incumbent on every man to conduct his business so that it shall be a means of grace; so that he shall not have to leave his calling for the sake of his religion, or to get a chance to be religious, but shall be religious *by* his calling, and *through* it. That is the Bible teaching. And it is strictly illustrated by the apostle, in his reasoning, in many places. I will cite but one passage—that in the seventh chapter of 1st Corinthians, where he says,

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it, rather"

There you find, in that verse, the philosophy of all those questions that are struggling for settlement to-day. The question of woman's right to speak; the question of the subject's duty to his sovereign; the question of democracy—all these questions are summed up in that one verse. The apostle gave direction for Christian conduct in regard to the state of society which existed. He did not touch the question as to whether they might by appropriate agitation change that state of society. He simply argued, all the way through, on this basis: *As things now are, such and such is your duty.* He left open the question, *What will your duty be when things have been changed by development?* And in regard to servants and slaves, his declaration is, "Are you called, being a slave? Do not think that Christianity requires you instantly to break your bonds. That is not your duty. Emancipation is not the first fruit and result of being called. Are you called so? do not care for it. There is room enough, and there are things enough, in your state as a slave, by which you can glorify God, and set an example before men."

"Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it, rather."

In other words, prefer it. Still, it is not indispensable that a man should be free. One may be a slave, and yet be a Christian, and worship God. And by his example, by his heroism, he can make all men know the power of Christ upon the human soul.

"For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman [if he is not his master's]; likewise, also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant."

Here is a paradox. It works both ways.

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

This, which was argued here in respect to just one relation, has been argued above in regard to the relation of husband and wife, where one is heathen and the other is Christian. The general principle laid down, is, that our calling, our business, our relationships one to another in which true religion finds us, we are to accept. We are, as it were, to permeate our avocation and our relations with the Christian spirit in such a way that our daily duty shall be itself a means of grace.

I think every physician should find in his duty as a physician the means both for nourishing his own body, and for doing good to his fellow men. I think that every lawyer should not be obliged to go out of his office and turn the key in order to find his God. He should carry himself in his profession as a minister of justice and peace; and instead of finding him quarreling and wrangling, we should find him administering his daily trust and duty with the feeling that he is serving both God and man, and that he is made more fit for secret commun-

ion by the very work which he is performing all day long. I think every merchant and banker ought to find in his daily avocation that which nourishes his conscience, his reason, his spiritual forces. I think every woman should find in the cares of the household that which should be an almoner of piety to her. Every child should find himself lifted up and made better by his association with children. Everybody, going to school, should find in his duty as a scholar—in his duty to his class, to his master, and to the whole school—not only the cultivation of his intellectual powers, but also food for his religious life.

Whatever your state may be, whether you are in a printer's loft or a collier's dark cave; wherever your lot may be cast, your first duty is to subdue your present business. When I hear men saying, "I cannot be a Christian in my situation," I say, "Probably you would not be one in any situation." When I hear men saying, "It is impossible for me to be a Christian where I am," I say, "You are discontented where you are, and it is not likely that you would be contented anywhere."

Wherever you are, there begin the battle; there subdue everything that stands in conflict with the law of conscience, and the law of love, and the law of purity, and the law of truth. Begin the fight wherever God sounds the trumpet, and he will give you grace that *as your day is, so your strength shall be.* But until we cease dividing our life into two parts—secular and religious—we never shall be very eminent and consistent as Christians; we never shall make any very great progress in the Christian life. Men are accustomed to think that their Bible is cut into two grand divisions—the Old Testament and the New. They think that the Old Testament is a pretty wild book; that there is a good deal of worldly matter in it; that in Old Testament times men were allowed a range, and did things, which would not be tolerated for a moment in the New Testament. That is to say, it is a book of the early growth of the race, and it discloses to us both what was the average attainment of God's people during the period which it embraces, and also what was the relative instruction required by that stage in the development of the human family. But men believe that it is a book of wild, and almost savage liberty. The New Testament they believe to be a book of piety and far more grace and spirituality. And they divide their lives just so. They have the old man and the new man, in place of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The old man does all the wickedness, and the new man all the piety. And so they have a religion that they try to take care of. During family prayers, and on Sundays, and on festivals through the year, they serve the new man; but all the rest of the time they let the old man have his way. You must slay the old man, and you must have a new man in Christ

Jesus—and that always and everywhere—or you cannot *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

There are many who, although they may not fail in these respects, fail in an unexpected direction—I mean by excess of things right. I know many persons who are in right courses, and have substantially right views, but who go beyond all prudence and all bounds of discretion in the use of themselves. I know many women who, in the family, and in the school, every day exert themselves a half more than they have any right to. They give rise to swarms of morbid feelings which they always lay to the devil's charge, but which God always sets down to their own account. They exhaust themselves by an industry so far beyond their own capital and their own endowment of strength, that they are perpetually held back and hindered. They are hurt in their Christian life by excess.

The same thing is true out of the family and out of the school—in business. Many and many a man does more work in one day than he has a right to put into three. Many a man works so that he breaks the law of God in almost every single point. Excess of enterprise and industry is a national sin with us.

Now, I hold that there are special emergencies in man's life when he has a right to draw on his capital. If there is sickness in the household, and you are the only well one there, it is not a time for you to talk about health. There are certain things that must be done, and you must do them. It is right, in times of great peril, when the ship may be foundered, or in times of battle, or in other emergencies in men's histories, when they are not to hesitate to draw on their resources. But these are exceptional cases. The ordinary law is, that no man has a right to go beyond a certain amount of consumption of his excitability. If he does, there comes a reaction, with all its morbid feelings, its temptations, its suggestions, and its irritableness. You sacrifice a thousand times more graces of the spirit by irritableness which comes as the result of over-exertion and inordinate activity, than you can gain by prayers and reading. Great men like Count Cavour in Italy, Bismarck in renovated Germany, Bright in young England, and Lincoln in our own calendar—it is right that they should have wasted the very fountains of life to bear up their times. A great work God gave them to do. They live long lives who live much, and these men lived the life of a thousand ordinary men, though they all broke themselves down by excessive taxation.

But that is not the law of the private. It is contrary to the duty of the mass of men. And yet, there is many and many a man in this congregation who is sinning against God every day of his life by excessive industry. There is many a man and many a woman here who

is breaking God's laws in nature, and breaking them in society, and breaking them in social relations, by an unwitting exhaustion through excessive activity.

As long as people say, "I cannot help it," they will not help it. *Cannot help*, although it is an extreme excuse and remedy, is a very dangerous one.

I have known men who *could not help it*. I have expostulated with men on the subject of such an excessive addiction to worldly toil; and they have said to me, "My affairs are peculiar, and they are in just such a state now that it is impossible for anybody else to take charge of them. I must carry them through." But within a week they were taken down with bilious fever, and could not get off their bed. And yet, their affairs went right along just the same as though they had been able to attend to them. I have never seen a man whose affairs could not get along when he was sick and could not get off his bed. The affairs of such a man may limp, they may creep, but they will *get along*. There is one thing that you may be sure of—that you will get through life, and that your affairs will get along, in one way or another; and half the time it is conceit, as much as it is conscience, that makes a man say, "I must keep my hands on the reins, or things will go so that I shall defraud and injure those who are connected with me on every side." Retrench. Draw in. Be less, and do less. Do better, and be better for doing better.

There is many a man who does not suspect it, but when he says, "I do not speak in meetings; I have had no great experience; I do not wish you to call upon me to pray; I have no gifts in prayer," it is as if I were to take a sponge full of water and dripping, and squeeze it till there was not a single drop of water in it, and then ask the sponge, "How do you feel?" and it should say, "Dry and arid. There is no moisture in me." No, it is all squeezed out. Here are men who take their hearts, that are just as full of feeling as anybody else's, and squeeze them so dry that there is not a drop left. Business has got it all. And they come to meetings, and say, "I have no experience to give. There is nothing in me." Why should there be? If you have used it all up for this world, of course you have none for the world to come.

I may remark, again, upon *too powerful companionship* as one of the influences which impede men in the Christian life. There is a very great benefit designed, to be sure, in the divine economy of life from companionship; but too much companionship is not good. Being too much in company, being too much with each other, being with too many people, is not good for those who would be Christians.

Did you ever know the difference between lumber grown in an open field and lumber grown in a forest? Ask the men at the Navy Yard

whether they prefer pasture-grown white oak or white oak that is forest-grown. They will tell you that they prefer three times over the pasture tree, that has had the wind and rain strike it on every side, and that, with its wide-spreading branches, draws to itself more nutriment than it is possible for the forest tree to get. Such a tree is tougher, and hardier, and better, and lasts longer, than a tree in the middle of the forest, that cannot send out any side branches, and derives strength from the wind, and nourishment from the rain.

People in cities, or people out of cities, with too much company, are like forest trees—long and spindling, so that nothing but the top ever gets the light; and they are weak from top to bottom. The need of a certain tough individuality, requires that a man should set himself free from over-addiction to companionship, even though it is good. The breath of men in a crowded room is not healthy for you to breathe; and the breath of many souls is unwholesome. Every man should have a chance to swing his arms around in every direction without hitting anybody. You ought to have room for your own being. The packing of men together destroys that individuality in which is all progress and all merit as before God.

This stands closely connected with another social hindrance to the development of true Christian life, and that is, the addiction of men to *pleasure*. I mean, not indulgence in wasting and disallowable pleasures, but an excessive addiction to recreation of any kind.

The first law which I should lay down, is the sovereign right of every man to make himself happy, and to be happy, in due measure. Not that happiness is the ultimate object to be achieved. Happiness is the concomitant of every right step toward the true end of living, which is a noble manhood in Christ Jesus. We live to make noble men and women of ourselves. And in doing that we have a right to enjoyment. For enjoyment flows with the normal activity of every faculty of our nature. But no person has a right to any pleasure, no matter how good or innocent it may be, in kind or in degree, beyond that which makes him a stronger and a better man. And nobody can tell that so well as the man himself, or his nearest friends.

Let us come right down from general statements to the questions which are agitated among you. May persons play cards? May persons dance? May persons go to the theatre? May persons go to the opera? May persons go to promiscuous parties and balls? My general reply is, that whatever thing you have tried, and have proved, and shown yourself to be superior to, in your religious development, so that the men around about you do not doubt it, you have a right to. If you make such an impression upon all whom you meet, that they say of you, "He is a God-fearing man; he has religion," then you have a

right to pleasure, though it may come through these adjuvants or instruments—going to opera, playing cards, and the like; and any particular kind that you may ask about will not hurt you. But if you are a man of pleasure, and if when you go among men they say of you, "He has no savor of religion about him; he has no power of the eternal world on him," then your pleasures harm you.

It is the flavor, not the name, that sells fruit. If I take an apple and I am told that it is a wilding or a seedling, and when I bite it is mellow, full of juice, and full of sweetness as well as juice, and full of spiciness as well as sweetness, I do not care whether it grew on this tree, or that tree, or the other tree, I pronounce it a good apple. On the other hand, if it be a *Mela Carla*, of Italy, and it is hard and insipid, I do not care for its name or honored growth: if it is a poor apple, it is *a poor apple*. There is a law of soil, and there is a law of growth; but, after all, *by the fruit shall ye know*.

If a man comes to me and says, "I have a right to hear Booth's Hamlet," and I know that he is foremost in the prayer-meetings, and foremost in reclaiming men, and foremost in works of self-denial for the good of others; if I know that when I go into his presence I feel rebuked for my worldly-mindedness; if I know that he has a nature that lifts him higher than common Christians, it is not for me to question his right to that pleasure. But if he does not go higher than that pleasure, it is for me to say to him, "Your pleasure swamps you." If he says, "It is not harmful *per se*, and it does not hurt anybody." I say to him, "I do not care whether it hurts any body *per se* or not, it has a bad effect on you. And whether it hurts you or not, is to be found out by looking at the way you live, and the way you talk, and seeing where the end of your life is, and where the emphasis of your spirit is." If a man is living above the world; if the tendency of his nature is away from worldliness, nobody will criticise his indulgence in pleasure; but if he indulges in pleasure, and lacks spirituality, then even permissible things have become harmful to him. Here is the law. We must live for God, and for our fellow men; we must have a heart that feeds higher than mere self-indulgence; and if pleasure is a mere minister of self-indulgence to you, you are to disallow it; but if, living preëminently in the Christian life you find that you can take pleasures without harm to yourself, then they are yours, as between God and yourself.

Well, is there no other question? Yes, oh yes, there is another question. What is that? It is the great question as to what a man may do with his rights. Paul takes the ground that every man must assert his personal rights. Now the question is, having once shown that I can indulge in such and such pleasures without any harm to me,

and with some benefit, shall I go on and indulge in them without any regard to the effect which my indulgence may have on others? "Oh no," says Paul. "There is no harm in your eating meat dedicated to an idol, but if your brother sees you do it, and, misunderstanding the whole of it, is led conscientiously into wrong, then you do not act wisely or kindly; for you use your right to break down his conscience and his right.

There are two principles in regard to rights. The first is to ascertain and vindicate them; and the next is to subject them to the law of love. There are a great many things that I have a right to, till love comes and says, "Will you not forbear them for the sake of others?" I have a right to eat meat; but for me to do it under circumstances such that my whole household are led to eat it, and they are thrown into a fever, is wrong. For the sake of keeping my children well, I would abstain from eating meat. I have a right to drink wine; but if I found that my drinking wine would lead poorer men to drink whiskey, or the young men around about me to drink wine, I would say to myself, "Shall I use a right of mine in such a way as to destroy my fellow men for whom Christ died? That would not be acting wisely nor well."

There are a great many persons who take pleasures to excess—things which do not agree with their stomachs; and they are dyspeptic all the time simply on account of their pleasures. There are a great many persons who take pleasures which disagree with them because their effect is to bring them into conflict with their fellow men; and so they are violating the law of love in their natures. And in both ways pleasures impede their progress in the Christian life

Let no man, therefore, suppose that I hold that pleasures are to be disallowed. I am the son of a King. The owner of the universe is my Father. He owns the heavens and the earth. There is nothing on the face of the broad earth that he has not made, and that he does not own. And it is all mine. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and all the fulness of the earth is mine. But it is my law as well as my pleasure to use all things in such a way that they shall contribute to the welfare of my fellow men, and to my own spiritual elevation, and to the glory of God.

But that is not enough. You have not settled the whole question when you have asked, "Is the thing itself right? Nor have you settled it when you have asked, "Is it right for me, so far as my individual profit is concerned?" There is a third question, namely, "Can I do it and yet discharge all the duties of pity, and mercy, and helpfulness to those around about me?" When you have settled this question, "Is it right before God and my conscience, and is it benevolent to

those who are around about me?" then you will have settled the whole matter, and not till then.

There are a great many persons who are not conscientious about pleasures. Some do not take enough, and some take a great deal too many, for their own good, or for the good of others.

But time fails me to press and probe still further these practical questions. Every man must find out his own hindrances and obstructions in the road which he has to travel. He may receive help from the admonitions of the pulpit, and from the councils of faithful Christian friends; but the duty of searching himself is incumbent upon every one. We are bound to *grow in grace*. If we do not grow, we are bound to know the reason why.

Christian brethren, are you fulfilling this duty? Are you moving forward on the way of life? Are you further along in the Christian life than you were when you began? Do many of you look back upon that time as the brightest in your history? Woe to that man who finds the brightest experiences of his Christian life in the very beginning of it! For, although there are joys that will be fondly remembered forever, there ought to be fruits of substantial victories in later life that shall quite eclipse in depth and power any early experiences. It is a shame to say that the whole after manhood is not so potential for serving God as the nascent state of Christian experience. Are you living in a nearer communion with God? Do you have a better understanding of Christ? Is it easier for you, when you are in trouble, to lift yourself up above it? Is it easier for you, when you are in care, to lift yourself above care? Is it easier for you to stand with your hand on the lion's mane, as the old prophet did in the lion's den, and yet suffer no harm? Can you walk in the fiery furnace? and do you find that the form of the Fourth is by your side? Are you living so that neither sickness nor health, neither adversity nor prosperity, can reach up to touch your settled peace? Is your life hid with Christ in God? And are you growing in these directions? If you are not, what is the matter with you? Is it some secret sin? Is it some desirable thing which you know of in your affairs? Is it some hatred? Is it some feud? Is it some bitterness? Is it some revenge? Is it some cherished selfishness? Is it some neglect? Are you living in the full light of God's countenance, and in the enjoyment of perfect peace in Christ Jesus? If you are not, why should the children of the King go mourning all the day? And why is it that you are living so far behind what you ought to? Is it not time for every one to examine and ascertain why?

For, the time is drawing near, to many of us, in which the greatness of the way will have been passed, and all our battles will have been fought, and we shall approach the celestial city, and Him who

dwells therein. And then, in that hour of royal meeting, to have been in conflict, and to have gained victories through suffering, will be more to us than to have empires or treasures uncountable in our hand. Remember Him who bought you with his own blood. Remember Him who waits for you in heaven. Think of them who have gone before, and are victorious to-day. And lift up holy hands of fresh consecration. Begin again, and fight boldly unto the end of life.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thee, thou Eternal King, manifest to us both in Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit in our own hearts, and in our own experiences, that thou art crowned with praises; that there is a land where there is no crying: where there are no tears and no sorrows. There is a land which is ripe; where eternal summer dwells without, and yet more within; and where every affection blossoms, and exhales the fragrance of love and gladness. And thou art walking in the midst of thine own redeemed ones, and in the midst of those who have kept their first estate. And thou art forever to them the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. They behold thee; and as flowers upon which the sun looks cannot but open and grow beautiful, so thy looking upon them becomes life and joy and gladness, and they begin to sing, and their every thought is praise, and their very life is worship, and worship is love and joy.

We are glad that above the storm, and above the sound of earthly troubles, there abides this land of sacred peace. Thither have flown some that sang by our side. There are some whom we folded and taught to speak with earthly language. There rest many who taught our hearts to love. There are the chief desired ones. And we are glad for their escape. Nor is the world altogether poorer for their going. They are with us yet, with more power than when they were bodily present. When we rise to our better selves, and by faith can discern the invisible, we are not separated from them. In our holiest thoughts, and in our purest affections, we are more theirs than ever we were in the infirmities of the common earthly life. They are not taken from us. They are but a step before us. It is their voice which we hear crying out perpetually, from the invisible city, Come, come. And we are coming. We are coming toward them, and toward thee that hath made them lovely, Lord Jesus. By faith of thee, by the strong drawing of thy love, by the gracious light and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we are coming to that higher and better life. Would that our steps were faster. Would that we might begin to fly. Yet we are grateful for any movement. We are grateful that we have learned thee; that our face is set thither; that the light strikes upon our countenance; that we behold thee sometimes, and see the city itself afar off, as pilgrims behold the glimmering city which they have not nearly reached; that we are in sympathy with them; and that there are many hours in which we can stand in Zion and before God, with the Spirits of just men made perfect, and enter into sympathy with all their rejoicings and thoughts. For all these things we thank thee.

And now, we pray that thou wilt not suffer us, by reason of any earthly and remaining desires, to bind ourselves fast. Especially permit us not to set up for ourselves idols anywhere along the road. Let us not seek ever to build tabernacles in which to worship thee. May we feel that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world. Here we are trained. Here, by the labor of our hands, by the care of each day, by the lesson of the sanctuary, by the duties of home, by the inspiration of a common and struggling life, thou art educating us for a higher manhood. May we bear our part well. May we not seek to throw off our burden before thy will is made known to us. May we not desire to go before we are called. May we be willing to abide here, although it is better to be with Christ than to be in this mortal life. And may we be willing to dwell, if need be, at the foundations, where no man shall see us work. May we be willing to work, though we see the work of others bringing the admiration and praise of men, while ours is hid. May we be willing, for Christ's sake, to work in obscure things, in things hidden, in things which men will never know. Oh! that Jesus might be to us so near, so dear, and so real, that all our work of life should be consciously done for him. Whether we serve or are served, whether we

are in high places or low, whether we are in joy or in pain, may we still feel that every breath and every endurance in life is an offering to Jesus.

And so, Lord, since thou hast suffered for us, may we be willing to suffer a little for thee and for ourselves. Wert thou crowned with thorns—and shall we not have some thorns? Shall we not drink that bitter cup which thou didst drink? Shall we be unwilling to be children of pain, that we may be children of glory? Rebuke, we beseech of thee, our faint heartedness, and our want of courage, and our want of honor toward thee. May we be willing, we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! to be chastised at thy hands, that we may rise from servants, and become sons, and become worthy to be sons, and be inspired with that same filial love, and that same sense of honor, which children have toward honored parents.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who are beginning to seek thee, and to find their life in thy ways and commandments. If at first it is rough to their feet, if at first the burden is heavy, and the yoke is hard, let them not be discouraged. May they remember thy promise, that the burden shall grow light, and that the yoke shall become easy. And we pray that their faith may not fail them until they prove thy word. Turn not any backward, nor suffer them themselves to go away. To whom shall they go but to thee? Where is there such patience, where is there such love, where is there such provident care, where is there such example, as there is in thee? And if they turn away from thee, on whom shall they lean?

Save the imperiled. Rescue the tempted. Strengthen the weak that are to be carried into captivity unless thou dost rescue them.

And we pray that thou wilt fill thine own people with some of that compassion, with some of that pity, which thou hast felt for lost men. And may they never be weary in well-doing. May they labor on, not knowing which shall prosper, this or that, or whether both alike shall fail.

And we pray that thou wilt bless all those who labor in word and in doctrine. Remember our schools. Bless the teacher and the taught. Bless all those who go forth to preach to the lowly and the ignorant. And we pray that thou wilt grant that those who are merciful may themselves obtain mercy.

Wilt thou spread the tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ to all; and may the power of the Saviour's love be felt by all hearts. And that glorious day which has lingered too long—may it at last begin to show its bright colors on the mountain, and the glory of the Lord begin to shine, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word spoken. We beseech of thee that thou wilt send it home to every understanding conscience, and to every heart. May we all live in a glorious discontent with ourselves, and in a glorious peace with thee; and may we so look upon our sins, and the sinful estate of our hearts, that we shall turn away perforce, and find our rest in thy glorious goodness, and in thy great mercy, and in thy redeeming love. Lord Jesus, thou hast nourished us. Thou hast rebuked us by thy providences and chastisements. Rebuke us still, and suffer us not to settle down into such captivity of indolence, or into such wrong ways, that we shall fail at last to see thee in thy heavenly home. Still smite us, and disturb us. Still stir us up to activity. And bring us, at last, when life is over, and all its conquests are won, to cast our crowns at thy feet, and say, Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

BEAUTY.

"For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"—ZECH. IX. 17.

The prophet is speaking of the Lord, and has been showing his wisdom; his overruling providence; his special kindness of deliverance toward the people. And in the last verse of the chapter he breaks out, "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"

One by one the various traits of divine excellence came before the mind of the prophet; and at last he, as it were, generalized them; and the whole vision struck him as a vision of extreme beauty.

This is not a singular representation of the Bible. We are apt to be misled by the fact that many figures which are applied to God are figures of an Oriental monarch. He is robed in state; he is represented as crowned and sceptered; and the beauty of royalty is attributed to God. And we are apt to suppose that as this is borrowed imagery, so the use of the term *beauty* is also figurative, metaphorical, and that the attribution of beauty as we usually understand that term to God, is unusual—perhaps improper.

On the other hand, the wisdom of God, his justice, his purity, his truth, his love—all of these, in quality, in quantity and in harmony, form a symmetric whole, which deserves, if anything deserves it, the epithet *beautiful*, and meets the highest conception and overreaches the highest aspiration which the human heart has for the element of beauty.

The Church of God, by a like figure, is often painted as a queen or a beautiful woman—a woman wise, beauteous, and clothed in beautiful garments. This is particularly so in the book of Canticles, where human life is spiritualized, and the divine character, and the divine tenderness, and the divine affiancing to the human soul, are set forth through that bold and peculiarly Oriental mode—the household love. And heaven, as it is represented in the New Testament, is represented upon the same substantial principle that is employed to make known to us the Church of God, and God's own nature. According to Scripture, heaven is the land of beauty. Whatever elements, by the general consent of men, represent utter joyfulness and perfect beauty, are selected and put together, and called *heaven*.

Priests in garments of praise, with precious stones, represented to

SUNDAY MORNING, April 10, 1870. LESSON: EPHESIANS II., 1-13—III., 1-21. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 216, 364, 655.

the age the highest type of a man, and they are transferred to the heavenly vision. Of all places that the Jew knew on earth, there was none for situation so beautiful as Jerusalem, and nothing so beautiful as that city—"the joy," as they termed it, "of the whole earth." And heaven was called "The New Jerusalem." And in Jerusalem there was nothing that struck men with such admiration and wonder as the temple, which blazed in its pristine glory of silver and of gold, and was carved with an elaborateness of art which was at that time unknown anywhere else. Then the temple was the very center of their conception of architectural exquisiteness; and it was employed to help them to form a conception of the heavenly land.

All things in nature, also, were gathered up; and it was on the principle of gathering up all the transcendent elements of beauty which create joy in man, that the heavenly city was reconstructed, and that it stands painted in the Word of God.

Is beauty, then, a reality in the higher spiritual life? Is there, in the inward, invisible and truly spiritual life, that which answers to our idea of sensuous beauty? Or is it figurative? Is it one of those childish things which the apostle says is put away when one grows up? No. I hold that beauty is first spiritual, and afterwards natural and material. I hold that it was divine; that it inhered in the nature of God, and the nature of spiritual existence; and that we call the outward and physical world beautiful, borrowing the term from the higher sources of beauty, instead of, as men are accustomed to think, calling spiritual things beauteous, and borrowing the term from sensuous pleasure. "That was not first which was natural," says the apostle, "but that which was spiritual." That is not highest which is material, but that which is invisible. And there is more and more real beauty, and less and less figurative and decorative beauty, as one advances toward the spiritual life.

Let us examine the relation of beauty to moral qualities.

As God has created the world, beauty is not a kind of seasoning scattered upon the weightier realities. Men think that the beauty of this natural world is a kind of decoration. As one builds a house, and then puts pictures in it, which are not really necessary to the well-being of the house; as one spreads a table, and over and above that heartiness of food which is needed to supply the body with strength, gives something for the eye, sugaring over the loaf, and tucking in flowers here and there—things that are very well, but things that are not food, and might be dispensed with; so men think that there is beauty, to be sure, in the world, but that it is incidental in the great framework of things. The substantial verities of things in this world, men think, have nothing to do with beauty. But I aver that beauty is not only a part of

the course of nature, so that if it were excluded the whole structure would be changed and re-formed to a new ideal; that it is not merely a frosting; but that all things in the great scheme of evolution and development tend towards their highest estate by tending towards beauty. Ripeness and beauty are identical. Perfectness and beauty are identical. Maturity, whether it be of fruit, or flower, or what not, works by stages towards beauty, in the material globe.

So that beauty is not an accident. Still less is it the trimming which God gave to the perfected work. It is the divine idea of a mode of creation. It inheres in the structure and in the subtle nature of things. God so-made the world that when organic life began to work towards higher and higher forms, it evinced that higher tendency by the evolution of beauty. It is a kind of goal toward which all right things are tending. It is in nature a kind of signal of attainment. So that it might almost be said, taking it on the great circle, and as a generic fact, that just so far as things are material they are remote from developed perfection.

As the human mind is cultivated, it becomes more and more sensitive to this quality. The less culture men have, the further they are from the admiration of beauty; that is to say, the less comprehensive is their admiration. The uttermost savage admires a glittering bead; but that is not admiring beauty. As men grow cultivated, every single faculty demands beauty. The reason, the social affections, the moral sense, the whole nature, comes more and more under the esthetic; and even the ethic clothes itself in the esthetic. So that when the human mind develops and grows toward its perfection, it grows toward the sense of beauty.

As beauty is the highest thing in nature, as all things have been seen to be developed in the direction of beauty, and as the chief, the sovereign fact in this world is man, so man himself indicates still more signally what is the law and thought of God in the creation of the world, and of the beings for whom the world was created.

Perfection in matter and ripeness of mind, then, are indicated by the tendency to develop, or the actual development and perfection, of the element of beauty.

But moral qualities come under this law, just as much as physical qualities do. *Fullness, fineness, and harmony*—there is the formula. In nature, it is called *quantity, symmetry;* and the equivalent of this in moral elements, is *fullness, fineness, harmony.* And this makes beauty in anything and in everything. Whatever elements the mind produces when it acts so as to give fullness and fineness and harmonious proportions to the product, are beautiful. That is to say, they produce the

sense of beauty in those that look upon them, and tend universally to do it.

Now, not only are right things commanded all through the Bible, but you shall find, upon analysis, that though the Bible does not use the term *beauty* as we do, it is not enough that we should be just, or that we should be conscientious, or that we should be true, or that we should be amiable, or that we should be benevolent. There is to be fullness in each of these elements, and there is to be harmony among all of them. And here is the formula fulfilled which goes to make social and moral affections beautiful.

It would seem enough to say to men, "Be kind, be generous, be benevolent;" but no. *Let love be without dissimulation. God loves a cheerful giver. Give without grudging one to another.* These are the elements that go to make beneficence; that free it from wrinkles; that give it largeness and generosity.

Men think of humility as being a stoled and draped nun, clothed in black, and downward looking. No; the humility of the Bible is not the exaggerated sense of a man's wretched imperfection. No man is humble who is looking down. Humility is the sense of such ineffable excellence that when a man's aspiration looks up, and he compares what he is with what he would be, he is humble. It is a state of appreciation in a man of excellence, and an ideal of an excellence beyond, sitting in judgment on his relative position, that makes humility. Humility is a head-up quality—not a dragging, miserable, mean feeling. Many men have mortified-pride, and call that humility. Many men have the blues, and call them humility. Many men palm off all the wretched and reactionary feelings of their nature, and call them humility. Humility is one of the noblest and one of the most resplendent of all the experiences of the soul. When every part of a man's nature is sensitive and apprehensive, and when the sense of character and of being is so radiant and large that the man feels his own relative imperfection, compared with that which he now perceives to be possible—then it is that humility is born, and is the child of aspiration.

So of conscience. Conscience is to be draped and clothed in gentleness and tenderness. And so of all the moral excellences. You will find, in one place or another, in the New Testament, not simply that they are commanded, but that they are commanded in certain modes; that they are to be exercised in certain ways; that on the one side the evils to which they are liable are cautioned against, and on the other, innocent, admirable qualities, which make them beautiful, are enjoined. You will find in the New Testament commands in respect to loving, and truthfulness, and generosity, and activity, and various other excellent qualities; and you will find that they are all

enjoined in their modes as well as in themselves. And in the instruction of the disciple, there is as much anxiety manifested that he should be *beautiful in holiness*, as that he should be holy.

The growth toward ripeness in moral experience is analagous to development in physical nature—that is toward beautifulness. Just in proportion as any one of our better feelings becomes predominant over the others, men feel that character is growing *lovely*, *attractive*, *admirable*, as they say. And these are only step-stone words that bring you to the last one—*beautiful*. And when a man whose passions have been in the ascendency, puts his affections over his passions, everybody says, "How much he is improved!" When a great truculent, bull-headed man, who has been living in the indulgence of the most beluine parts of his nature, begins to be subdued by home influences, and the little child is able to lead him; when his great strength begins to be brought under the control of his tenderer domestic affections, everybody says, "How beautiful the sight is!" It *is* beautiful. The term is exactly well applied there. And when you find that superadded to this, there comes over a man's nature the higher graces, the magnanimities, the generosities, the fervors of devotion; when one begins to live by the power of hope and faith and love, and maintains purity of living, men look upon him and say, "Admirable! Beautiful!" And it *is* beautiful—*literally* beautiful.

There is nothing so beautiful in this world as beauty of character. Oh! how men long for it! I do not wonder that men have worshipped Gods that they made out of men. Man is a worshipping creature, and if he cannot get anything better, he will make his own God. A God he will have, and a God he will worship. Men hunger, they long, for some Being that they can reverence and adore. The artist does not more long for beautiful features or faces or forms, than every moral nature longs to see characters that are so well, so strongly, so harmoniously, so finely and fully developed, that they impress those who behold them with the idea of admirableness, and make them feel that it is pleasant to sit and look at them, and to be where they are.

I have known some persons that impressed me just as some pictures do. Now and then there is an elect picture. Most of the pictures in this world are *in their sins*; but now and then there is one that has been converted, and is elect and precious. And to sit in the room with such a picture is to have a perpetual blessing. If a man could swing the rainbow as a hammock and sleep in it, how the poet would like to do it! But now and then there is a rainbow-picture in the room which is like the falling down upon me of all sweet and celestial influences. I know not what it is; and I am lifted before I am aware what lifts me. Now and then there are picture-persons; but they are rare. We

are obliged to take each other just as we are. We are only good in spots, at any rate. Most persons are like these street organs, that have been very much used, in which only every other note sounds, and in which each of the notes that do sound has an individual liberty of its own; and so it is crank-turning, with a hop-skip and a jump, one note being hit here, and another there, with a blank between. Now and then there are harmonious natures, well chorded, well put together, even in quality, admirable in proportion, entirely self-restrained, and with force enough to throw out a continual influence. Under such circumstances we feel not only that they are beautiful, but that they are beautiful in both senses—that they are physically beautiful, and morally beautiful. For it is not possible that one should be under the dominion of a noble feeling, and not look beautiful in the face. So really is beauty the creature of the mind and the soul, that when the body is never so homely, if the soul has the power of expression, it will shine through and fill the pores of the skin, and transform the individual. There is no person who is not radiant when he is under the inspiration of the highest feelings. There is no person, though he be hump-backed, and dwarfed, and disfigured, who, if he has the love of God, and a soul of praise, will not shine with divine outward beauty. Though his body may not be symmetric and harmonious artistically, yet everybody will say, "He is handsome. The deformed lump is not as homely as I thought."

Ah! the visions that have gone from men! The most beautiful things are the things which you remember, and that were fugitive. Many of you remember the day when you thought God had sent a ministering angel to wait upon you all your life. That ministering angel became your companion; and you were imperfect, and she was imperfect; and you went on battle-door and shuttle-cock fashion; and by and-by you settled down into a kind of humdrum life of toleration one for the other. And you would laugh at what you called sentiment and sentimentality, saying to the young, blasphemously, "Take it all out now. I know what that means. I was once in your place." And yet there come hours in which such an one remembers how the most beautiful thing he ever saw in this world was the fair virgin face of the loved one, in that moment when the full assurance of love dawned on her soul. And she remembers his face. And there was not in all their life another point of time in which they looked reality so absolutely in the face.

Men say that that was sentiment. Men say that that was fancy. *I* say that it was the very alphabet of everlasting truth. I say that it was one moment's gleam through the opaque and sin-contorted world, so that these persons saw how beautiful the soul was in its best feelings, in their best moods, when they were radiant. That was seeing the soul

itself. Ah! that the curtain should have fallen so soon! Ah! that the literature should have been so little! Not only do men know that these things are beautiful, but if they grow in this knowledge, if they go on learning, the longer they live the longer and the more perfect becomes, not simply their appreciation of beauty, but their conviction that of all beautiful things there is nothing in this world like a beautiful soul and like the beautiful experiences which proceed from it. Moral quality, then, is beautiful.

Now for some applications.

1. All the world recognizes beauty in the lower grade of qualities. Everybody recognizes gentleness as something very beautiful. Everybody recognizes amiableness as something very beautiful. It is the higher moral experience that men lack a knowledge of. Devotion is more beautiful than passion. The love of God in the soul is far more beautiful than any love to man can be. Faith and hope in their full fruition are to the eye of anyone that looks upon them far more attractive and far more beautiful than a cheerfulness or buoyancy or hopefulness of the lower life.

The qualities of religion to which we are called are supreme, not alone in importance, but in art even. They are essentially and intrinsically more admirable, more noble, more beautiful, than all the lower experiences. Men recognize the truth in regard to the lower ones. We look at what are called the *moral virtues*, and we think them to be admirable. But I will tell you that the analogy of the same experience which you have had in regard to the lower forms of emotion, goes on up to the very highest. And when I call you to a Christian life, I call you to the supremest art. I call you to the highest range possible. For to be a Christian man does not mean that a man should become meager, and poor, and mean, and low. It does not mean that he should become, as it were, the offscouring of the earth. There is more nobility in the Christian idea than in all others put together. You recognize beauty in body, and you recognize a faint idea of beauty also in the lower social qualities. And that same God, so much of whose handiwork you recognize, has made beauty to rise and be more impressive, and more grand and glorious, as we go up. And when we come to the heavenly land, methinks we shall be yet more impressed with the wonderful radiancy of beauty than with all other things. We shall be like men that look the sun in the face. The light will be so strong that if we should gaze full upon it, it would blind us.

2. How great is the variety of spiritual things in the Christian life! and how few things are gained! When one looks at the varieties of spiritual beauty which are possible, he is struck with the meagerness of actual attainment among men. There are very few Chris-

tian experiences which have become strong and powerful. Little fineness is given to our Christian feelings. Everything is defective in harmony. In other words, if I may so say, Christians are barbarians yet. And what I mean by that is this: A barbarian will be half-naked, with no clothing except a ragged blanket about his loins; but if he has a string of beads around his neck, and something in his ears, he is immensely tickled with his beauty. And you laugh at him. But Christians are just like him. They have two or three tinkling virtues that they put on which cover a part of their nakedness, and leave the rest uncovered. Miserably clad, they are, in the garments of nature; and they are quite elate and quite proud of their attainments, and their beauty and grace. Ah! a sense of beauty requires more largeness, and more harmonious adjustment of all the parts of our nature.

How many persons are there that are beautiful in temper? How many Christians are there in this audience, who, under provocation, blossom into beauty—that is, who have meekness? How many persons are there, who, in the midst of all their gains, are humble—that is to say, have such a sense of that which lies before them that they are *not puffed up;* that they do *not behave themselves unseemly;* that they do *not think of themselves more highly than they ought to think?*

How many persons are there whose good nature is anything more than the mere product of good health, so that when they are unwell they are cross, and when they are well they are good natured? How many persons are there in whom there is anything like disinterested benevolence; who really like to do good; and who act benevolently without stopping to ask whether it is for their interest or not—who do not depend upon the poor crutch of self-interest to hold them up to their benevolence? How many persons are there who sow not expecting to reap again? How many persons are there who do kind and beneficent things from the love of doing them? How little of that which we call evidence of piety or Christian character, has strength enough to go alone! How it is mixed with lower motives! How few there are in God's choir on earth! and how discordantly they perform together when they attempt to emit the sweet sounds of Christian experience in life!

The Bible declares that God's people in the world are the bride of the Lord. The church is spoken of under the figure of a bride. It is compared to a bride adorned for her bridegroom. Paul represents Christ as preparing to present us before the throne of his Father, without blemish, wrinkle or spot. That is to say, as a young man, going forth, finds the companion of his life, wins and marries her, and brings her home with unutterable joy and gladness, sure that the household will all admire his choice, and presents her, fair and admirable, to his

father and mother, so the Bible says Christ is doing by us. He is wedding us to himself, and is preparing us, that by-and-by he may present us perfect before the throne of his Father.

But how little is the Church beautiful in its grace! How little is there which makes us so comely that God will be glad to look upon us, and will say to his Son, "How fair is thy bride!" Life has done so little to us that death must do a great work if we are beautiful when we get to heaven.

3. The unbeautifulness of Christian life is sadly shown in the popular impression with regard to religion. What is the impression of the world at large in respect to religion? Is it the general feeling that it is desirable and beautiful! No. To a very large extent men feel that religion is something that may be obligatory, or as a duty, but that there is nothing attractive about it. Or, they regard it as a policy of safety, for the most part, and feel that if religion can be got along without to the end of life, it had better be deferred, that they may take their enjoyment and spend themselves in worldly pleasure, but that in their last hours it is well for them to step in and take religion, and so be safe for the future. That meets the idea of men.

The true idea is, that a man who goes into a Christian experience, goes into a larger liberty, and goes into a larger joy—not the joy of the mystic; not the unsearchable, hidden joy of faith; but any joy by which a truly Christian man may be made happier. Whatever it is right for any man on earth to do, it is all the more right for a Christian man to do. May the hired servant eat? and may not the son eat? May the servant respectfully speak to the master of the house? How much more the son!

If a man has come back to the divine conception of human nature; if he is attempting to shape the whole character and life so that manhood shall be what God purposed in the great outline of nature; if he is brought into communion, through grace, with God; and if he is made an heir of immortality, and he feels both worlds, around him and in him, and the whole power of the God-head is resting upon him, and his mind is coincident with God's, and the divine thought mingles with his thoughts, do you suppose he is made mopish and miserable by these things?

We are told that we must *take up our Cross and follow Christ.* Yes; but every step the cross of Christ grows lighter and lighter, until by-and-by the cross carries us, instead of our carrying the cross.

Why, we are as men that are in a dungeon, and to whom the word comes, "Brake your chains, and get out of your prison, and follow liberty." To be sure, they must put forth exertion to break out; but the moment they are out, are they not better off than they were in prison?

The word of the Lord comes to us in our bondage to the animal appetites, in our bondage to opinions, in our bondage to carnal and secular pursuits, where we are all moping, and groping, and looking down; and we are called to a higher life. We are called to more freedom in reason; to more freedom in moral sense; to more freedom in affection; to a wider, purer, finer, nobler way of living. There is not one feeling in ten in your nature that you use. But God calls you to the whole of yourself. And the way to come to one's whole self is through a true Christian experience. A man who knows how to be a better husband, a better father, a better friend and a better neighbor, is happier for it. A man who is called to a Christian life, and responds to the call, does business easier, and more naturally, Whatever a man does, he can do better if he does it as a Christian does it, than if he does it as a man of the world does it. There is nothing that so helps a man in the discharge of the ordinary duties of life, as harmonizing his whole self with the divine conception.

In being called to a Christian life, then, we are called, not to circumscription, nor to gloom, but to largeness, and power, and symmetry, and fineness, and fullness—in short, to *beauty*. And every man who becomes a Christian ought to seem more radiant than ever before. And he will if he is living in a full understanding of his privilege, and up to his privilege, or anywhere near it. For it does not require perfection to be handsome. A moss-rose bud is handsome before it blossoms.

4. Christians should at least be as sensitive to spiritual beauty as to physical. I do not blame men who want to surround themselves with outward beauty; but I do blame them if that is not a suggestion to them of that other and higher kind of beauty from which it sprang, and of which it should be a symbol perpetually. All men should love beauty in common things. I think less of a man who does not. If a man drives horses, I like to see knots on his horses' heads. If a man is an engineer, I like to see him polish the brass and the iron on his engine. I like to see a man that has a little corner stuck full of flowers, though he is obliged to earn his very daily bread off from the scant ground that he owns. The sentiment of beauty is a thing which belongs in a man; and the absence of it is a deformity.

Some men thank God that they do not care for these folderols; but it would seem to me just as sensible for a man to come in with the stump of an arm, and hold it up, and say, "Other folks are proud of two hands, but I thank that God I have only one." Are a man's deformities things to boast of? Are they subject-matters of gratulation?

Every man who is a true man has in him, and all over him, if he only could get at it, and give it culture, a sensibility to that which is

harmonious and fine and beautiful. I do not, therefore, blame men for building themselves handsome cottages, instead of homely ones. I do wonder that they build such homely ones, when it does not cost any more to build a fine line than to build a foul line. I do not wonder that people have their trellises covered vines, and their gardens filled with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs. I marvel that men should be so insensitive as not to admire these things about their houses. I cannot imagine why it is that men should build fine houses, and pay thousands and thousands of dollars for carpets for the floors, and for paper for the walls, and for perpendicular carpets for the windows (spending great sums of money to get the light in, and greater ones to keep it out), and for upholstery—I cannot imagine why it is that people should do these things, and then have no pictures in their rooms except those miserable Swiss machine pictures (I wish all the ships that start to bring them across the ocean would founder on the other side), every one of which represents a mountain, a stream, a bridge, and a fool looking at it generally! They go all their life unhungry, unthirsty, needing nothing, wanting nothing that shall feed the soul with higher beauty; but they must have a carpet every five years; and they must have a big, fat, plethoric sofa. That which shall minister to the fancy, to the esthetic nature, they can dispense with. They do not want anything which shall lead them to look beyond the profitable; which shall teach them to carry the idea of profit higher than that which is measured by money or by the esteem of men. I marvel that men do not have a larger sense of beauty. I do not marvel that they have a sense of physical beauty; but I do marvel that when men have learned to love things beautiful, they stop short at the body, and do not want to be beautiful of soul.

I see men that groan because they are neuralgic. There are men whose temper has been neuralgic all their life; and nobody groaned but those who lived with them. I see men who are retiring from business, on account of nervous depression, over-work and over-anxiety; and they nurse themselves, and care for themselves, and every morning look at their tongue, and every day they feel of their pulse; and the road between them and the doctor's house is beaten hard. And yet they have been a great deal worse inside. If they could see their soul's portrait, they would see that they are sick enough there. But they never went to a doctor on account of their soul. They did not care much about that. They could not bear to see the pains of the body, but it did not trouble them to see the pains of the soul. They could not bear to have outward things inharmonious, and less than full and powerful and symmetric. They loved to clothe whatever they had with the garments of beauty. And when they come to the higher form of beauty, why is

not the analogy carried on? Why do not men want to be beautiful in their higher nature? Why do they not desire the best and noblest things? Oh! the conflict of life—the damaging conflict of life! How many there have been that started out brave, pure, true and noble, but that, by the time they were forty-five years old, shook their heads, and said, "These things are very pretty to talk about; but there is not much reality in them. Life does not permit their realization."

Now, I believe it is possible for men to be men in this world, harmonious, brave, noble and beautiful. It costs some trouble; but it is worth all it costs, a thousand times over. And we are called to it. I do not believe one word in cynicism. The cynic is my abhorence. When men tell me that this life is to be poor in order that the other one may be rich, I deny it. It is not so. If we are only willing to be rich and beautiful in the right place, in the right way, and in the right elements, then this life calls for riches and beauty. This is the meaning of the Master, when he says, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In a town—or city, as it called itself—where I had a former parish, there were but two or three gardens, and I undertook to preach the Gospel by the garden as well as by the pulpit. I had my little acre, and filled it full of things that I could ill afford to buy, and which I could not beg; and on Sundays, I used to see many of the German population out looking at them. I had a bed of three thousand hyacinths one year; and they were an attraction to a great many of these common folks. And, to their honor, I will say that I never lost a flower. But then, they were *Germans!* My roses and other plants blossomed, and the neighbors continually saw them. And my efforts in this direction were not without their fruit; for, though I never said a word on the subject, it was not long before my example began to be followed by others. Now and then there was one that came and looked over the fence and shook his head as though he doubted the wisdom of my devoting so much land and so much time to the cultivation of flowers. I recollect that an old elder of my church stopped one day, as he was passing, and, with a twinkle in his eye, said, "Wall, I s'pose you enjoy all these things. I think the purtiest flower I ever seen was a cabbage"—which was very well for him. Nevertheless, taking the young and the old, they saw my bright flowers, and the love of flowers grew, and it was not more than two or three years before there were ten times as many flowers in that town as there ever had been before. It was a small and humble way of fulfilling the law, *Let your flowers so shine that men, seeing how beautiful they are, will go and make gardens for themselves.*

You have a garden, but how miserably it is kept! People go and look over the fence into that garden, but they do not see anything there which they want to reproduce. And I do not wonder. I should not want to be a Christian if I had to be what some of you are, just as you would not want to be one if you were obliged to be what I am. We are not handsome enough to make folks want to be like us. We are not true enough Christians. We do not live high enough. We are not beautiful enough. But Christ says to every one of us, "Plant. Let all sweet graces come up in you. Let them blossom. Let there be something for every month of the year. Let the twining vines and the trees hang low with fruit. Let the whole garden be filled with fragrance and beauty, that men seeing your good things—your blossoms and fruit—shall glorify your Father which is in heaven." That is the way we ought to live; but alas! alas! it is not the way many of us do live.

5. God is bringing all good men toward that realm and that indescribable experience which is hinted at in the words of Scripture. The work which is going on in us, we do not ourselves at all appreciate.

Have any of you ever been present when an organ was set up? I have, on several occasions. Imagine a child looking at the litter, at the glittering pipes that are scattered about, at the unfinished outside, and at the mysterious and obscure inside. Little by little the machinery is put into its place. One by one the stops are introduced. And at last, after pretty much all is in, one man goes in, and another sits at the keys, and they begin to bring the organ into tune. Did you ever pass by a church where this process of tuning was going on? Do you recollect passing by this church when this organ was being tuned? One note was taken as a comparison note; and the next one, being put down, began to squeal in the greatest discord. Then it was subjected to a series of tappings and knockings, when it came up, and came up, and came up, until at last it was brought into a perfect blending. Then the next was taken, and that began away off, and came up screaming like a child dragged to its parent, and gradually was subdued, and finally was all right. And if I thought once, I thought a thousand times, when this organ was being put up, "Well, that is just like me. The Lord is bringing me into accord in that way, and I scream when I begin, but work up to a tuneful state at last."

That is what is going on all over the world in the churches. We look upon this great scene of human life, and are apt to think that it is a mere chance, hustling conflict. No; there is an Eternal God; there is a divine providence; there is a work, mystic, mysterious and hidden, going on. And under tears and pains and cries, and in the midst of conflicts, and with ten thousand things that seem to be jang-

ling, harsh discords, the tuning hand of God is at work; and little by little the whole human family is being brought up higher and higher, and God's people are becoming more and more harmonious, and more and more beautiful; and very soon we shall be carried forward into that land where the whole work shall be completed upon us, and the glory of the Lord shall rest upon us, as the sun rests on the blossoming fields in June.

Let us not be discouraged, brethren. Let us mourn that there is such imperfection and such discord now; but let us remember that we are to go into heaven, not by our perfection in beauty, but by the grace of God, by the gift of love. Let us remember that we are being carried into the other land as the struggling wretch is carried into his father's house, for discipline—a discipline that shall make him a sweet child. Let us remember that by our trials and sufferings we are being made beautiful. Do not count them to be the most fortunate who seem to be the furthest removed from God's discipline. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards, and not sons."

God is working. Trouble, anxiety, forelooking, foreboding, anguish, bereavement, disappointed affection—these are only so many tools which God is employing, by which to polish, and make fair and comely, the qualities of your soul. And by-and-by, out of this shop-work, out of this tribulation, you shall rise fair as the sun, glorious forever, and shining as the stars in the firmament of God.

Take courage then. Do not look down and within. Wait for the hour of transfiguration. As from a mountain-top behold your hope, like Christ, whiter than snow. And in that royal moment look up and take your measure and conception of life from this highest and most radiant point. And then rejoice.

Soon pride will have done its battle. Soon selfishness will have run out. Soon all disturbing passions will have lost their power. More and more time itself helps you to bring all the royal attributes of your soul into fullness and harmony. And pretty soon death shall put the crown on your head. And then you shall be as beautiful as God—he being Father, and you children, and heaven the glorious land of beauty.

Are there any who wish to go with us? Who would be crowned for a moment and discrowned forever? Who would wear the garments of praise for a single year, and then moan forever more?

My friends, we are living an invisible life. There is a kingdom of God within us. There is a work of God going on there. It is a hard work. It is a work in which our progress is slow—it humbles us to

think how slow. Nevertheless, we are called; and being called, we are being educated by the hand of the Lord. Will you not join the number of those who are preparing, by the strife of this life—by its joy, by its hope, by its precious experiences, as well as by its cares and sorrows—for dying, and who shall be more and more disclosed as they draw near to death?

In that last hour, you and I will be very different, oh man! You are richer than I am now; but when you come down to the grave, and your will is made, you cannot take one penny of that difference which there is between you and me with you, and I shall be richer than you are then. My treasure is laid up in heaven, but yours is laid up on the earth. Oh friend! when you go down to the grave in your old age, and the wine, the dance, the exhileration, the gay associates, and the wild wail of wickedness, are gone, you will think of them as of a storm on the horizon, in the past. And you will be withered. And you will have no hope, no outlook. Then the poor man, that seemed to have nothing in this life—the Lazarus that lay at the rich man's gate—will begin to come to his immortality. In that hour his joy will begin to rise above the horizon. They that have nothing but the hope of immortality are stronger and happier the nearer they come to death; and they that seek this world as their chief good, drift further and further from their possessions, the nearer they come to the mortal hour. My help will come to me when I need help most. You have your help when you need it least. By-and-by, when heart and flesh fail, you will have none at all. My joy is to come. Come gray hairs, come dimness of vision, come dullness of hearing. In me these are signs that I am about to sprout and grow in a higher life. But when infirmity whitens your locks, when your eye grows dim, when your ear grows heavy, have you a future? Is there immortality of joy and blessedness for you? If not, are you living right? Are you living according to the dictates of your own reason? I do not ask you to join this church, or any church; but I put the question to every sober-minded man's conscience and understanding, Are you living so as to be rounder, larger, finer, purer, in every respect, all through? Are you living so that you know you are coming nearer to God, and nearer to the spirits of just men made perfect? Is your future growing radiant, or is it growing sadder and sadder? Are you living right? and if you are not living right, is it not time that you should gird up your loins, and step out of the old ways, move out of the old ruts, and take a new start, with a new purpose, and earnestly call upon God for help, that, peradventure, before the day be past, he shall come to your rescue, and your soul shall be saved?

May God make us all wise unto everlasting life and everlasting beauty.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, with humble boldness, our best Friend, and highest. With thee is all power and all discernment. With thee is all goodness. Infinitely more tender art thou than man knows how to be. For the human soul is a desert, parched, that bears no good thing; but thou hast an everlasting garden on which comes no winter. Thou art infinite in all excellence, beautiful in holiness, standing above all conception of man—beyond all power to conceive. Thou art the One overflowing with excellence, which is imparted to all that are near, and that can receive the joy, the light, the life, the love, of all that are garnered in heaven. Toward that blissful centre tend all things that are good. Time, that sifts all things, shall collect and bring to thee whatever is worth preserving in all the wide outlying realms of universal being. And thou art the Father, the best Companion, the nearest Friend. Thou art the One most suited to all the moods and exigencies of the human heart. And though there are gradations of being infinite, and those that reach nearer to the companionship of the Almighty than we do, yet thou dost condescend unto us; nor dost thou stop upon the outskirt where they are that have reached the highest, with the noblest endowments. Thou dost also dwell with the broken in spirit, with the humble, and with the contrite ones. Thou dost love, not because of our excellence, but because of the stores of lovingness that are in thy nature. Thou dost come to us as the day comes, that does not seek out the things that are the fairest, but rests upon all things, and makes them fair in its own beauty. And so is thy righteousness unto us, which covers our imperfection and homeliness. In thee we become gracious and beauteous. All our good is of God. Thou art perpetually sending forth that influence which should create us into true holiness. We bless thee for what thou art, and for what thou hast revealed of thyself. And we are glad to believe that this is but the beginning; that we know but the alphabet; and that though even this little so transcends the measure of human experience that we can scarcely take it in, yet, forever and forever, in ascending vision, we shall still find thee out, and forever there shall be more to be known than has been compassed. Thou art infinite; and in our immortality we shall not exhaust thee. And we rejoice that we may call ourselves the sons of such a God; and that we may, with humble boldness, draw near to obtain mercy and help in every time of need. And we come, this morning, because there is no hour and there is no moment that has not its need. We need thee for sanctification. We need thee to instruct us and to warn us. We need thee to rebuke us and to chastise us. We need thee in thy providences, in our own volitions, in every home experience, in all our work and way of life. And we rejoice in that fullness of providence, and in that divinity of providence, by which we are still with God.

We pray, this morning, that in every heart there may arise gratitude and thanksgiving for all the mercies of the past. And may every heart lift up a consecrating fervor to-day for the future. May we desire to be more truly thine than we have ever been; and may we lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. May we behold him in all things, and always behold him, and live in him, so that there shall be but one life—thine in us, and ours in thee.

Wilt thou bless this congregation, and look upon all that are gathered here from diverse ways, but that have one nature, pointing in one direction—toward the great future. We all march together. Grant that it may be under one banner, and to the sound of one voice. And we pray that we may be united in fervent faith. And grant that in the great union of hearts in the love of God, and in the hope of immortality, we may stand more to rejoice in this unity than to look upon the things which dissever us out-

wardly. Oh! may we be ashamed, as a part of the universal church, that we suffer the figments of our own imagination, the inventions of our own hearts, to dissever the body of Christ. May we look upon God; and knowing that love is greater than all other things, and that all thy people are united in love to God and in love to man, may we refuse to thrust away our brethren, or to be separated from them. And still, though in outward life walls and partitions are built up, grant that there may be that fervor of love which shall fly over every wall. And as birds find each other in the upper air, loosed from the entangling thicket, so may thy people of every name fly high enough to reach each other when they reach their God. And so may there be spreading upon the earth the one living, blessed church of God, and the union of all true hearts.

We pray that thou wilt bless thy cause in every form. Wilt thou advance civilization throughout the globe. Wilt thou lift up the poor, the naked and the needy, from the outskirts of creation. Grant, we pray thee, that barbarism may cease, and that civilization may take its place, and that superstition may pass away, and that a true religion of love may be breathed upon all hearts. May wars cease, and therefore the provocations of war. May oppression pass away, and may the glory of the Lord arise and shine in all the earth.

We thank thee for the great things that thou hast done in our day and generation, for the regeneration of this nation. We had not hoped to live to see the day of emancipation. We had not expected to behold that wondrous work which thou hast done, and by which thy name shall be glorified for ever and for ever.

We thank thee for the mercies which thou hast granted to this nation, and that after so great and cruel a war such peace hath come, in such measure, upon the land; and that the channels of industry are filled again; and that prosperity comes with the seasons over the continent. Still be our God, as thou wast our fathers'. Let us not provoke thee by our sins. May we humble ourselves, and cleanse our hands, and learn to do justly, and to live rightly. And so we pray that we may have peace in our time.

Bless, we pray thee, all the nations which struggle for their liberties. Strike on the side of the weak that are right, against the strong that are wrong. And we pray that thou wilt overturn in all the earth till He whose right it is shall come and reign. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt bless us. Out of the wealth of thine own nature, pour upon the poverty of ours. For we are the sand that has nothing, and thou art the cloud that is full and waiting to drop down fatness. Grant, we pray thee, to all that are whelmed by influences which are greater than their own resolution, the mighty strivings of thy spirit. May none grieve the Spirit of God by which he is filled. May every one hear God calling him to holiness, to glory, to immortality. And grant, we pray thee, that there may be many who, instead of being enemies, may be sons, rejoicing in the Lord, and in the full liberty of the household of faith. Wilt thou bless us while we sing again. Go home with us. And when life is over, bring us home with thee. Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

ALL HAIL!

"As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."—MATT. xxviii. 9, 10.

It seems appropriate that on such a day as this we should turn aside from a more formal discourse, and review, with some familiarity, the scenes, or some part of the scenes, which transpired upon the occasion which all the world joyfully celebrate to-day.

We have selected, for our opening sentence, the first words which our Master spake, and which are recorded. They are the words of cheer and of hope. He brought from the grave with him no chill. He came back from death with no message of terror. He had been in the spirit-land, and in the spirit of it had returned again most companionable, to recognize his friends, to pity their weakness, to reassure them with love and confidence, and to fill them with joy.

All the circumstances of our Lord's return are full of exquisite beauty. The things omitted, as well as the things told, are worthy of note. The sepulchre is shut. And during his sleep no word is spoken. There is no dwelling upon the morbid features of his death. The whole description of our Lord's crucifixion is sublimely abstinent and simple. A few strong lines are drawn upon the dark and stormy background, and the main features stand out never to be forgotten. Beyond that there is no attempt at effect—nothing minute—no stroke after stroke to work up the effect. He is laid away quietly; and just enough incidental record is given to enable our imagination to follow the events—and not always to follow them consecutively. There is many a gap to be filled up. There are some things that we cannot reconcile: not because they were irreconcilable, but simply because some link was left untouched. There is a sublime carelessness in the record.

He was conveyed by loving hands—though not by those of his disciples—to his rest in the rock-hewn sepulchre. Nothing more is said. How he was borne in, what tears fell upon him, what lamentations

EASTER SUNDAY MORNING, April 17, 1870. LESSON: MATT. XXVII. 62–66; XXVIII. 1–10; LUKE XXIV. 9–11. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): No. 255. *Te Deum.* No. 296.

there might have been, we are not told; nor anything of his condition while lying there. No light is held, by the record, at the sacred portal, to reveal the form that lies muffled within. It might have heightened some dramatic interest: it was deemed, however, not profitable to deal in this matter. Nor are we shown the act of the resurrection itself. In none of the narratives is the precise time of the first act given, nor any approaching symptoms of emotion. All that we know is reflected from the experience of those outside. There is no revelation, by a line, of what went on within. Nor has the Master ever spoken a syllable of his own experience. All that is recorded from his lips is of the most general character. He speaks of the past in the most generic manner. He never specializes, never details, and never draws out at length any one experience. Had we, that are of an inquisitive temper, with a habit of analyzing our own experiences and those of others, and with the philosophic curiosity which is so common to our age—had we been in the disciples' place, we should have asked a thousand questions of our Lord respecting his sufferings; of his thoughts while suffering; of his state after death; as to where his spirit roamed, or went; of his resurrection to life; of the power by which it was effected; of his earliest thought in rising from his bier. But none of all these things ever appear to have been asked, and certainly to them no answer was given. At any rate, there is no trace, there is no record, of any.

The time, however, is to be noticed. For, in reading of what the affectionate women did, we learn what was the period of our Lord's resurrection. No stress is laid upon the fact; no effort is made to set forth the divine reappearance in the dawning light of the early morning; but it is said, not with reference to Christ, but in explanation of the women's conduct, that it was between dark and light that Christ came again. "As it began to dawn," says one; "When it was yet dark," says another; "Very early in the morning," says a third; and all of them are descriptive of the dawn of day out of the darkness of night. Long before men came forth to work; before the air was burdened with noises; just as the first tentative notes of waking birds began to be heard; while the leaf unshaken was yet loaded with dew; while nature was cool, and pure, and tender, as if newly made—in this early morning hour it was, that Christ came forth into newness of life from the sepulchre.

Think what you will of it, I never stand in a summer's morning before the sun dawns, long before waked by birds, to look out upon the yet dim and dusky landscape, that I do not think that this is the hour of resurrection. As the night held the day, but could not long hold it, and unclasped its dark arms to let forth the morning again, so

every day is, to them that have an imagination therefor, a resurrection day, and sets forth all these most noble and beauteous features in nature, and symbolizes forever and forever the resurrection of our Master.

Why do we need robes, and why do we need church symbols, when every feature of nature itself is one divinely constituted symbolization, not simply of spiritual truths, but, if well used, of almost every event that occurred in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? And no other one thing more beautifully symbolizes the resurrection than the silent coming of our day, every morning, from out of the darkness of night, saying to those that have ears to hear, "All hail!"

But of all this there is not one word of detailed description. He waked, he arose, he came forth, he looked abroad, he cast off his grave-clothes, and moved away—though not out of the garden; and yet, all this we must imagine.

Is this history, then, an invention? A thousand hands are busy to-day, to tear away the evidence of its reality, some tracing all the way up through the ages, if peradventure they can find some superstitious monk, or some counterfeiting hand, to show that the Gospel sprang thence. A thousand are scrutinizing the events, and laying one over against another, if peradventure they may find that it was not written by the men who professed to narrate it. Is this history an invention? Did cunning hands form it to impose upon the world? Did superstitious devotees forge the narrative, and then leave the most tempting parts for effect untouched? These omissions, these very neglects to specify the personal experiences of our Lord, are themselves evidences of divinity. The points of ordinary, ardent curiosity are passed by. An inventor would have seized them. They would have been strong points in an invention. But there is a noble negligence in the Gospels which can be explained only on the theory that artless men were telling the truth as it appeared to them, not for a purpose, not even with a philosophical insight into it, but as a simple record of facts of which they or some of their company were eye-witnesses. And there it stands, beautifully simple, and in many respects imperfect—not imperfect in the sense in which that phrase will convey a meaning to your ear, but imperfect in the sense which John means when he says, "If all the words which our Lord spoke, and all the things which he did, were written in a book, I suppose the whole world would not be able to contain it."

We have but a portion, we have but a fragment, of any part of the life of Christ. None of his discourses are fully given. None of his days are fully journalized. None of the great events of his history are entirely made out. It is but a sketch. And since we have but this outline, the beauty of it, the coherence of it, the divinity of it, the power

which it has exerted, and still is exerting in all the world, can scarcely be accounted for on any other ground than that it is true.

It is to be noticed, too, that it was love and fidelity that first found out the resurrection, and that it was not the love of the disciple band—not even of John; but that the deeper and more tender love of woman was the pioneer of discovery. The disciples doubtless held in their hearts the memory of Christ. We may well suppose that theirs was a sleepless night—a night of watching, of prayer and of supplication; but the night and the morning to the women were of tender service. It was still the heart of woman to do. It was still the labor of her hand, if might be, to crown with memorials of tenderest affection, the form from which the life had passed. And of all the women, there is no intimation that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. But Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Joanna, and other women, were present. They had come laden with ointments for embalming the body. They had no hope to see the eye beam upon them again. They never expected to hear those words from his lips which had thrilled their hearts before. It was a service of disinterested, complete and ever-remembering love, such as women's hearts know best how to cherish and how to express.

They gathered around about the twilight tomb. They came, and oh! surprising was the sight. That massive stone, which defied the lifting of their tender hands, was already rolled away, though on the road they had communed with each other, how they might gain entrance to bestow their pious care upon the body of the Saviour. And on the stone sat the angel. Two there had been—the angel at the head, and the angel at the feet. Francesco Francia of old has represented these two angels most exquisitely—one as the angel of the past, remembering grief, and the other as the angel of the future, only hoping for the time to come. And so one angelic form is sad, and the other is bright and radiant.

The women counted not these things; they felt. They communed, with full alarm and full joy—for both strove within them for expression.

The narrative is as dramatic as words can be made. It came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, entering again into the sepulchre, behold, they saw two young men sitting on the right side, clothed in long, white, shining garments. And they were afraid. And as the women bowed down their faces to the earth, in obeisance—for there was something divine in their appearance—the men answered and said unto them, "Be ye not affrighted, for we know that ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, that was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen, as he said." And they remembered his words. And they departed quickly, and fled from the

sepulchre, with fear and great joy. For they trembled and were amazed. Neither said they anything. For they were afraid, and did run to bring his disciples word.

But Christ was yet lingering in the garden. He had not gone forth. He knew that they were coming. He had already, by that divine insight which he had, perceived their coming on, and waited for them. He waits ever more for those who are seeking him, whether it be in the early morning light, or in mid-day. He is ready to receive those who are seeking their peace and their joy through love in him.

It is somewhat significant that he did not go to the great city over against him. There is no evidence that he went to it at all. It was then coming slowly into light. There was nothing in Jerusalem that his heart craved to see again. Galilee was his early home, and it was thither that his thoughts were now moving. And therfore it was that he charged those that first found him to go on toward Galilee.

His first words, of which we shall speak more in a moment, are memorable in this, that he seems, without saying it, to have turned away from Jerusalem, the scene of his trial, of his shame, of his suffering, of his anguish, of his death, and points back again to Galilee, the scene of his fair youth, the sweet remembrances of which doubtless came back to him even in this hour of the morning of the resurrection.

But mark the words:

"As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by his feet and worshipped him. And then said Jesus, Be not afraid!"

All hail! Be not afraid. These may almost be called the voices of the grave. Within the hour of his coming forth, doubtless they had met him. The cool of the rock was yet upon his brow. The sadness of death was yet scarcely cleansed from his eye. He came from death and the grave, saying, "All hail! Be not afraid."

His was the inspiration of the other world coming through, as a narrow passage, the grave—the rock-grave. He spake in the spirit of the land from which he had come; and to every one that has heard of Jesus, from that day to this, that voice still rings out. His salutation to each one is, "All hail!" and to every one his greeting is, "Be not afraid." Very God, our Judge yet to be, holding the destiny of every man in his hands, the sovereign Lord and Monarch, yet he meets every one who goes to him, how poor soever he may be, how sinful, how neglected, how outcast; and his greeting is, "All hail to thee!" And to every one that looks up, and is conscious of his greatness, still his greeting is, "Be not afraid."

But, in the local interpretation of it, going back to the thought that this is the language which first was breathed from Christ's lip as he came forth from the sepulchre, how strange is the interpretation which

it gives to the grave! What does the grave say to you, and to me, and to every one that looks into it? What "hail" has it, as we stand by its side, to look down into its narrow passage? What cheer breathes forth from it? What does it say to us but, "Corruption and Decay?" What does it say but, "I am the end of all glory?" Oh! we go from the clasping and the caress and the kiss to the grave, that has neither kiss nor caress nor clasping. We leave behind us the heart as we go to bury our dead. We cling to them. We look wistfully after them. And as the sad soil beats upon the drumming coffin, with horror in the sound, what says the ground to us, but, "Go back again, earth to earth. All is over and ended?" And yet, what might it say to us, if we were but wise to interpret it. "Here thine eye shall see nothing more, but look up, and look through, and look beyond; for to thine heart there is immortality beyond." The grave is but the shutting of the angel-hand that keeps the treasure, and conveys it safely to the other side. As they that sail over the seas go down into the vessel, and are hid, so the grave is but the resting-place of the dead for a little time—not decay; not loss; not final separation in darkness. No; instructed by these words, the voice should sound out to every one of us, that comes to the grave-side, "All hail!" and as we look again, "Be not afraid." And as we are cheered and comforted, and lift up our heads, the voice is still, again, "Go tell my disciples. Make known to them that which has been joy and peace to you."

And see; this is not only the voice of the grave, but there is in this *hailing* of the disciples, and in this cheer, the interpretation of the truths of Christ Jesus. The very genius of Christianity, as it is afterwards developed in the recorded words of Christ, is contained in this simple greeting of our Master to those that so early sought him. This cordial greeting, this greeting as of blessings—"All hail!"—is the greeting which Christ makes still to the poorest, to the most needy.

For, foremost among those that thus early met him, was Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast so many devils. And whether the ancient legend of the church be true or not, that she had been a woman lost to virtue and restored again, it is very certain that she had been under the dominion of foul demons, and had been restored by the hand of Christ.

This woman was first and foremost in the love of gratitude, as well as the love of common affection. And so she seems to have led all the rest, and to have been first and foremost in seeking for Christ. And to her the voice of the Saviour was a voice of sweet familiarity and of greeting. It was as if he said, "All hail, to thee and to each!" This soothing their fears; this lifting upon them the light of hope; this radiant face of resurrection that they saw; this coming forth from

the dead, not maimed nor crippled, and with no blood curdling in the veins; this at once entering upon the social relation, with "All hail!" and "Be not afraid"—does it not interpret the whole after-spirit and mission of Christian life in this world?

There is in the world a superficial and perishing pleasure of the senses which we are permitted to have. It is good of its kind, and for its uses; although, as compared with better it is poor. And there is nothing in Christianity that frowns upon this. An excessive addiction to it is frowned down; but even philosophy learned to do that.

Christ taught a deeper joy, a soul-regaling joy. He opened the eye to the world everlasting. He taught men to derive their satisfaction, not from things that perish, but from thoughts; from pure emotions; from noble ambitions; from all tender relationships; from a sweet and divine and spiritualized taste. He opened the eye to the world everlasting, coupling this with that, and making them a part one of the other—this but the vestibule; that the temple.

And since then the empire of joy has been extended. It is true that through misinterpreting the spirit of the Master, his suffering has by some, and for periods of time, been made the most significant; but he looks with an uninstructed eye who supposes that the history of Christ, or the peculiar genius of Christianity, is sorrow. In spite of all the symbols that he employed, though he said we must take our cross and follow him, yet by his own disciples, among the apostles, in the early church, and in the words which he himself uttered, it was still taught that the empire of joy was the empire of Christianity; and that it came, to be sure, to make men weep—but tears that should dry up tears, they were; to make men sorrow, only that they may be lifted above sorrow; to make them bear the cross, only that the cross might by-and-by bear them. Christianity was educating and reforming. But it made men suffer—yet only as the surgeon does, who takes them from pain toward sanity; from sickness toward health. And though the medicine be bitter, the bitterness is that the tongue may be cleansed from bitterness. And they are made weak by medicine that they may be made strong, and do without it. And Christ came with tears, came with suffering, and died; but that he might put an end to suffering, and establish joy in all the world. And when he returned to his disciples, after his short sleep in the grave, his first spontaneous, outbursting greeting, was, not that of his own suffering; not that of the weary world which he had re-entered; not that of the awful and affrighting mysteries that might have been imagined in the other life. He came back young, and sweet, and, as it were, vivacious, with "All hail!" upon his lips, and "Be not afraid" cheering them from out of his heart. And since that time, they that have truly known the Lord Jesus Christ

have never ceased to have, from day to day, this sweet greeting. As the morning comes, it is still "All hail!" to those who know how to listen. And in the great and hot noons of summer, when all the air in the great ball above our head trembles as wine in the cup, it is still, from out of that great air above us, "All hail!" And when evening, coming forth, approaches with tenderness, it is still "All hail!" And every day and every year, the voice still sounds, to those that have an ear to hear, and shall to the very end of life, "All hail!" And when death itself shall come to us, still the greeting will be, "All hail!" And as we leave things certain, and venture into things uncertain, still the voice will say, "Be not afraid." For these first words with which Christ came back to his disciples, are words that now sit high in the heaven, and sing forever and forever the notes of the world's joy and of the world's deliverance.

I will not follow further in this line of thought to-day; but there are some points of application which I may well make before I leave you to your own reading and to your own better meditations.

These words of our Master are words which may be called *messages*, to-day. They come to those who are beginning a Christian life with peculiar appropriateness. You are entering upon a life, my dear friends, such of you as have been called to Christ, and have listened to the invitation, and are becoming, in the sight of men, the recognized disciples of the Master—you are entering upon a life which has its trials, its watches, its sufferings. I should scorn to call you to any life not demanding manhood. To be a Christian man requires you to be a full and noble man. You are called to reason. You are called to all the noble variations of moral sensibility. You are called to every depth of affection. You are called to discipline. You are called to enterprise. You are called to all achievement. You are to make yourselves better, nobler, happier, that men may be won to your side. You are to make your companions better. You are to make the world better. Ye that have put your first steps into the royal road have entered upon such a life as this. And to you the word of the Lord comes this morning, "All hail! Be not afraid." He that has called you will walk with you. He that has begun the work in you will complete that work in you. Be not afraid of temptations, that they will be mightier than your faith. With every temptation he will open a door of escape. Be not afraid that men shall harm you. If God be for you, who can be against you? You are created by him. He has suffered for you. He has lain entombed. He came forth, perfected by suffering, to be the Captain of your salvation. And in the earliest experiences of your Christian life, he says, "All hail! Enter. Live on. Be not afraid. Because I live, ye shall live also."

And to those that are far along in the Christian experience this voice sounds out, likewise. To you Christ still says, looking upon all that remains of your mortal life, looking upon the uncertainties which many of you feel, looking upon the many difficulties which you are now wrestling with, looking upon providences which you cannot scan or interpret, looking at the mysteries which hang over your life—Christ still says to you, "Be not afraid!"

This morning, full of memories of his resurrection, is full, also, of suggestions and pledges of his faithfulness to you. Since you have proved him in days past; since his word to you has been "Yea and Amen;" since he has never broken a promise; since he has done exceeding abundantly more for you than you could ask or think, how full and emphatic to you should be this greeting of your Saviour!

And to you who are out of Christ; to you who have looked wistfully, to you who have felt yourselves unworthy to speak his name, if he could look upon you, with majesty and love in his gaze, he would gently beckon to you, and say to you, "All hail!"

To you who have never loved him; to you who have done him despite; to you who have set at naught the instruction of your childhood; to you who have by a thousand judgments and warnings been often and often adjured to remember your own souls, and your God, he still would say, "All hail!" And if you turned with penitent heart to him, with open arms he would receive you, and say, as you lingered and looked wistfully, "Be not afraid." Oh! that there were in us to-day this heart of confidence and boldness, that we might venture boldly upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and *be not afraid!*

Once more. That which was true of our Master, and that which is true of us, and will be as long as we live, we shall find to be true in the life which is to come. We soon shall pass the allotted bound. We, too, must lie down in the grave. We must go forth into a life unknown, after so much that is known. A pathless path we must tread; companionless go among the infinite hosts of the spirit land, alone, surrounded by millions; go as though never taught to make proof of the first elements of experience there. And who shall bear us up? Who shall stand by us in dying? Who shall teach our thoughts to be strong, and our hearts to be brave? And when flesh and heart shall fail, who shall be our salvation?

Dying, the voice shall still be to us, "All hail!" And when, bewildered, in the valley and the shadow of death, we seem almost to stumble, the rod and the staff shall be brought to our hand, to hold us up. And the voice shall still guide us, "Be not afraid."

And upon the other side, when these eyes shall open again, and these hearts, chilled in death, begin once more to beat, then the first

words of greeting, oh mother! shall not be from your child; oh husband! shall not be from your wife; but Jesus shall meet us, and say, in the early morning of the eternal world, "All hail!" And, trembling, lost, uncertain, we shall be clasped in his arms, while he shall say, "Be not afraid."

And then, as if the seas had broke forth, and as if all the heavens were but one mighty music-band, the angels of God shall acclaim us ransomed, and bring us where death shall have no more dominion over us forever and forever!

To the faith and the love of this ascended Saviour, I commend your souls.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Father, thou hast made us to need thee, and thou hast blessed us with the knowledge that thou dost need us. Thou hast spoken by thy Son, and thou hast made known to us that he loves his own, and loves them unto the end, craving for them, that where he is, they may be also. Thou givest interpretation to meanings of our own hearts. Our inarticulate yearnings, the longings which come, we know not whence, and point we knew not whither until by the Holy Spirit we were enlightened; the prayers uttered through us by the Spirit; the groanings for us which cannot be uttered—all these teach us of God's work, and of his wonderful way toward men. What we are we know not. We find our forces less than all the agencies around about us. We are filled sometimes with admiration, and oftener with pity, and sometimes with contempt for ourselves and our fellow men. In the great aims of life; amidst all its strivings, and supersessions, and treacheries and deceits; in its cruelties, and cryings therefor; in all the great round of fears, and rivalries, and excitements, wherein men are lifted up and measured, and cast down as in a moment, if we look forth into the boiling tumult of human life, to behold what man is, measured by time, how poor a thing is he! How weak and worthless is life! A dream; and a dream mostly filled with nightmare. But if we look at thine heart, and at all the way of manifestation which thou didst make upon earth, there is something more to man than that which is revealed here. This is but the first summer, and not the blossom-bearing summer. There is another life; there is a higher realm; there are other developments. He is worth more than he seems to be. His weakness is not the index of what his nature is. Thou hast reserved him for a higher sphere; and all the outgoings toward him of thy nature, and thy thoughts, and all thine acts, do interpret him to be of a stature worthy to be called a son of God. And it is in this future enlargement, it is in the fact that we carry the germ of immortality, and that we are not known now even to ourselves nor to one another, but that we are walking disguisedly, and that we are better than our best, and that there is more in weakness than might can understand, and that we are to rise far above the power of sublunary things, and stand redeemed from every trace and taint of sin and weakness—it is in this that we have joy, and it is in this that we glory. For, if we sleep forever when we sleep, we are of all beings most miserable. And if, with such a height of expectation, with susceptibilities so acute and so wide, we are to be quenched as the taper is, and to go out in darkness, life is not worth having, so little is that which we have in life. It is the beyond, that we long for. It is the right to be ourselves in all the largeness of a true and royal nature. It is that we may become like unto thee. It is the hope of that blessed society in heaven which makes life tolerable. And we rejoice that we are not left dimly to guess; that our pulse is not left to beat feebly with pulseless expectation. Thou hast spoken it, and the words have come to our ears and to our hearts, and we believe it—that *because thou livest we shall live also.* Thou hast ascended up from on earth. Here thou didst walk and speak the words of eternal life. Here thou didst hold forth thy heart of love, and thou didst cheer us in all the way of life. Now thou art waiting behind the screen. It is but a veil. Only these mortal bodies hide between us and thee. Ere long they will be taken down, and then we shall see thee as thou art, and shall be like thee. Oh! with what greetings shall we be received! How blessed it will be when we rise to meet thee in the other land! But now we are exiled children, away from home, taught in school afar off, and awaiting the summons of blessed affection. Yet we desire, oh Lord our God! during all the time in which we are tabernacled in the flesh, to walk by the faith of the Son of God; to have no idol, and no other God but thee. We desire to cling fast to thy words and to thy love. **For if we are with thee, nothing can harm us.**

And we pray that thou wilt grant that thy people may be augmented. We thank thee that so many know the hidden glory of thy Spirit; that so many know the secret of divine love; that so many have walked by faith, as seeing Him who is invisible.

We are gathered together, this morning, to celebrate again, to renew all our thoughts and all our sensibilities in view of thy resurrection, and thy rejoicing life. Come forth again the flower of the world, the light of time, the blessedness of the universe, the hope of eternity. Thee we hail this morning, and we acclaim thy name. We rejoice in thee. We rejoice in thy power, which not only brought thee again from darkness and death, but is bringing us forth from darkness and death. And now we beseech of thee that we may with all our hearts renew our life and our service to thee, and cling to thee only, so long as we live.

We pray for thy blessing upon our households. May a new light come with the Sabbath day. If there are any who have not been wont, with their households, to seek thee from day to day in prayer, may this be the day of all the year in which they shall come before thee, and establish in their households the daily prayer. Rise upon them with a more blessed resurrection even than that which is recorded in history. Bring home thine own self to them, and stand in the midst of every family, and say to them, *All hail!*

And grant, we beseech of thee, thy blessing to rest upon any that are wandering. Restore them. Clear the sight of those that see a little, but do not see distinctly, that they may have a guide on the way of purity and truth and love. Reclaim those who are gone astray. We pray for the outcast and the neglected. We pray for the ignorant and the uninstructed. May there be many that shall be filled with that suffering love of Christ which shall go forth to seek and save the lost, and have them restored.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless bountifully, this day, the assemblies of thy people which are gathered together in joy to worship thee. And may thy servants that speak be prepared to speak the very truth of God. May there be those that shall go forth with the light and knowledge of Christ unto all the nations of the earth.

O Lord! let thy promises at last hasten. Long, long have the predictions waited. At last let the morning dawn, and the night flee away, and all the joy of the earth be consummated.

And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises ever more. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, how shall we ever thank thee in mortal language for that gift of nature and of grace for which the world waited long—the gift of thy Son, Jesus Christ—a blessed gift. Oh, Purity of heaven come to earth! oh, Gladness of love made known to men! oh, Grace of truth and justice, yet not acerb! oh, Joy, yet not sensuous and impure! oh, Blessedness of God, and Hope of man! let others leave thee, we will not, if thou wilt not leave us. Since the day our souls heard thy call to us, we have loved thee, and through thee have learned to love the Father and the Spirit. But thou art nearest to us, and most comprehensible to us, and art personally concerned in us, and all thy thoughts are around about us, and we are drawn to thee with irresistible attraction. We would be better. We would have thy friendship purifying us. We would be redeemed from the weakness of the flesh, and from the power of temptation, by the majesty of thy victorious love. And since thou art willing, we are willing. We rejoice that

thou takest us in all our defilements, and all our imperfections, and art teaching us how to be tender, and how to be forgiving, and how to be magnanimous toward those who are unworthy of the greatness of thy love and magnanimity toward us. Oh! what despite hast thou suffered at our hands! Oh! what long tolerance has thine infinite purity had! Oh! how gentle and gracious has thy sparing mercy been! So blunted have we become, that we do not appreciate the way of grace with us from day to day, and through all our life; and yet, it has been through thy goodness.

And now, O Lord Jesus! we will not leave thee nor forsake thee. We will not let doubts drive us from thee. We will not suffer any cunningly devised philosophy to drive us from thee. We will not suffer the world, nor the pleasures thereof, to seduce us from thee. Hold us fast. Do not let us go till the day break—nor then. Hold us fast while we live, and, by living, bring us unto that greater love, and that greater joy, and that greeting of the morning when the shades have fled away and the singing birds shall be far behind us, and the rolling time shall no longer be heard, and no storm shall be felt or dreaded: in that sweet morning of everlasting peace, when thou shalt receive us with *All hail!* to heaven. And then we shall see thee as thou art. In amplitude, in transcendent glory, in ineffable love, we shall behold thee. And as those that are around about thee sing forth their everlasting joy, we, too, caught in the sympathy, will praise thee, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

NIGHT AND DARKNESS.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."—EPH. v., 11.

The term *fruit—unfruit*—is not uncommon in Scripture usage. The origin of it is very obvious. That which the tree produces, or brings forth—its fruit—is very naturally transferred to that which a man develops in the form of conduct; and that is called "fruit." "The fruit of the Spirit" is said to be "love," "joy," "peace," and what not. And things that are *unfruitful*, by contrary, are worthless. "The unfruitful works of darkness" are such works, or disclosures, as are without profit; without juice, as it were; without benefit, sustenance, goodness.

"The works of darkness"—this is the phrase for which I have selected the passage; for I wish to-night to speak on the subject of Night and Darkness. "Have no fellowship with the works of darkness."

Light and *dark* are employed in the word of God to signify good and evil; and, again, sin and obedience, virtue and vice, right and wrong. They have passed so perfectly into usage that "darkness" is considered as equivalent to sin, and "light" is considered as equivalent to virtue, without any figure. Not only so, but comprehensively viewed, in Scripture the whole realm of evil is called a kingdom. All that proceeds from men's passions and appetites is considered as a kingdom; and those people that do evil are the inhabitants of the kingdom. So Satan is called "the ruler of the darkness of this world," because he is the ruler of bad men. And so, on the other hand, there are the "kingdom of light," and the "household of light," and the "children of light." Therefore we are commanded to *let our light shine*; as if it had been said, "Let your virtues shine." It was not necessary to make an interpretation even.

The context carries this figure out in a variety of ways. "Ye were sometimes darkness"—that is, Ye were sometimes *wicked*—"but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light," "and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove

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them; for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Why did such a use of terms come into play? Was it accidental? Did it merely happen so? And then, having received a start, was it copied, so that at last it becomes common usage? For it is not peculiar to either Scripture language or to our own. Neither have we borrowed it from Scripture alone. It belongs to all languages; and, as far as it can be traced, it is peculiar to all nations from their very earliest days. It may be said that as far as literature interprets human habits, the race has been accustomed, from its earliest infancy, in all languages, and under all circumstances, to regard darkness as the equivalent of misconduct, and light as the equivalent of right conduct; so that if there is any such thing as a natural term, those are natural terms. Light and virtue, and darkness and wickedness, are convertible terms, the world over, and through all time.

How, then, did it happen? Was this a grand chance, or is there some connection between these things? Is darkness congenial to wickedness, and productive of wickedness, more than light is? Do men sin easier, more, worse, in darkness than in light? Is there any natural principle involved here? Yes—most certainly, yes.

Let us look at the normal uses of darkness and of night. It is very difficult to say much about them. It is difficult to say anything about creation. It is difficult to say why it is as it is. The moment you begin to ask why, there is no end to it. You might say, "Why are men created to average five feet ten, or eight? Why are they not made twenty feet? There is no end to *whys* in the matter of creation.

Why it is that full one-third of one's time is for death; why it is that of every twenty-four hours there are eight hours of substantial death, no man can say; but so it is. It takes eight hours to wind up the watch—that is, man. And experience teaches us that during that time of sleep darkness is beneficial—chiefly in this regard, that it puts everything to stillness; that it withdraws excitement; that it leaves the whole physical system, and the whole nervous system, quiescent; that it leaves it in just the state in which the peculiar function of assimilation which goes on during wholesome sleep, finds its most auspicious circumstances. Darkness, to this extent, therefore, is a benefit. It is medicinal, in that it withdraws excitement, and gives full opportunity for rest, and for that recuperation which comes by rest. This is what it was designed for, in the economy of providence.

But in undue continuance, darkness is depressing to the physical

state. The amount of knowledge now collected on this subject is such as to leave it without a question. Outside of its normal uses, and beyond a certain extent, darkness is unhealthy. Men are not strong and wholesome who live from day to day in darkness, and work in darkness. Men that dwell in unventilated and unlighted dwellings, are never robust, and never have that peculiar stamina coming from light.

It is with trees just as it is with men. A forest-grown tree; a tree that is not sound from top to bottom; a tree that has not grown, and become seasoned, as it were, in the sun, is never so tough, is never so elastic, is never such good timber, as a pasture-grown tree.

Pasture-grown oak brings a higher price in the Navy Yards because it is stronger and more enduring for being grown in the sunlight. And what is true of timber, is just as true of men. Sunlight men, who have lived in the sun, are sturdier than men who are deprived of the sunlight. And statistics show that men who live in north rooms, in rooms facing the north, in any street, are more addicted to illness than men who live in rooms facing in the other direction. It seems as though this was carrying things too far. Not at all. Statistics show that among men in unsunned quarters of barracks or hospitals, there is some twenty per cent. more mortality than in quarters where the sun rests the greater part of the day. The fact is the best medicine in the world is sunlight. The best doctor is the sun; and he does not charge anything for giving the medicine either. There is nothing better for health than the sun. And there is nothing worse for health than the want of the sun.

So that if you look at it purely as a physical question, you find that there is a reason why light should be assimilated to virtue. It produces health of body, just as virtue produces health of mind. And darkness, on the other hand, like sin, aggravates disease, depresses the vital functions, and retards recovery. There is a certain analogy in these things; and there is a reason in their very physical operation why these terms should be used as they are.

But there are other very important results of a moral kind connected with darkness, and therefore with night which is the kingdom of darkness. It is capable of producing even more depressing effects upon the moral nature than on the physical. The dangerous passions of men are held in check mainly by those elements which exist strongly and most generally in publicity. Fear, shame, self-respect, and self-interest—these four elements check our basilar nature. For, at the bottom, we are animals. And how to keep the animal under; how to restrain it within its service-bounds; how to prevent its riding; how to keep back cruelty, and cunning, and all forms of passion, and all

gross and sensual appetites—how to do this, is the work of civilization. It is the teaching of time.

Fear is a powerful repellant of temptation, a powerful restraint; and with many natures it is the only one. As we go down on the scale, fear becomes more operative; and as we go up on the scale, and as civilization and moral culture increase, fear becomes less and less operative, and less and less heeded. But in regard to the great mass of men, anything that breaks the realm of fear is unsalutary and dangerous, because it takes off one of the hoops that hold the barrel together in which the evil spirits are confined.

Shame, too, is a thing of publicity. There could be no shame if there was no ear to hear; if there was no eye to see; if there was no other mind to know. For shame is a sense or feeling produced in the soul of a man by the consciousness of other people's opinions of him. And this, in its very nature, requires disclosure, development. And any circumstances which should prevent exposure and development, would remove the tendency to shame.

Self-respect is very largely dependent, also, upon the opinions of others—though not so much as is shame. Self-interest, too, is largely dependent upon the opinions of men. Our prosperity, our standing, depends upon men's thoughts of us, to a very great extent. Certainly this is so with the lower class of men; that is, uneducated and undeveloped men.

Now, darkness tends to relieve men from the pressure of all these restraints. In darkness men can hide; and therefore they are not afraid that they will be detected. No man can reel in the street by day and not be seen. At night he can—or he thinks he can, if he cannot. Men cannot do works of wickedness by day, openly, without being known, and being put to shame; but at night they can—they think they can. That is the time for concealment, when the sun hides, and virtuous men go to sleep. At night, when good men and all responsibility are within doors, then out of doors bad men ramp and riot. Now comes the kingdom of darkness. Now they have their chance. All day they have been afraid; all day their interests would not let them out; but as the sun has gone down, and is out of the way, and the children of light are out of the way with it, they mean to hold carnival. And they do. And night is found to be a time peculiar in this regard, that it sets loose the lower passions of men, and tends to do it, and has a powerful tendency to do it. There is a permission of wickedness in the night that there is not in the day. There is not only the provocative to wrong doing, but there is a guard, a conservative influence, thrown around about it at night, that is not thrown about it in the exposing hours of noon-day.

Night and darkness suspend men's labors, and give them release, so that they are able to congregate. And this, joined to the foregoing consideration, shows why wickedness multiplies itself so fearfully at night. During the day, industries are being carried on, and thousands of men are earning their daily pittance in the shop. And work is a great benefit. Men, while at work, are orderly. They are being wholesomely drilled. Their energies are concentrated on useful purposes. But at night all their energies are diverted from these legitimate channels, and are apt to be concentrated upon their self-indulgence. For men that toil, particularly men that live by toil, and are in some degree of circumscription and limitation of means, feel as though they had a right at night to pay themselves for what they have gone through during the day. They have worked hard; they have been temperate and under others' control; and at night they say, "Nobody is our master now. We have eaten our plain fare, and performed our hard work; and now we will pay ourselves for it. Men have strong tendencies at night to react from regular and virtuous method into license; and as they have the liberty of congregation, as they go out and gather together in their places of resort, whether they are vicious or virtuous, they form a public sentiment among themselves, and uphold each other. Men in hundreds indulge in language that they do not when they are alone or in mixed society. They indulge in practices which would seem loose and unvirtuous to them if they were in promiscuous assemblies. Men herd together, the good with the good, and the bad with the bad; and night is the time for bad men to come together, not only because they are shielded, but because they are released, and have liberty of congregation.

As a general thing, under such circumstances, the bad men in a community are more influential at night, and in the circumstances which night produces, than good men. There are certain situations in which good men are by far more influential than bad men; but they are usually exigencies. They are usually times in which the public sentiment calls for the exhibition of nobler and more manly traits. But the moment you step aside, the moment you step into the crevices of life, and into the abnormal ways of life, bad men rule it over good men. In a crowd of routs, a simple, plain, truth-speaking, moderate-tongued man is nothing. He is negatived. It is the violent, the noisy, the impudent man that there carries the day. At night, where men are gathered together in disreputable places, they that are the worst are apt to be the most influential, and to lead the rest. They give tone to the society, currency to its maxims, and stimulus to its temptations.

And therefore it is said, I think, in the next chapter of this very book, "We wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against prin-

cipalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." In this world they are "the rulers of darkness" that are the bad men; and there is, as it were, a great prince of darkness that rules over all darkness, and all bad men that are bred in darkness.

There is a curious phenomenon of moral change in society. Every twelve hours, if we will watch the thermometer, we shall find that the temperature of the day regularly changes, rising in the day-time, and going down at night. Taking the year through, that is the normal condition or range of the thermometer. And there is an analogy or parallel to it in moral temperature. We shall find that the virtue and the moral feelings ascend upon the scale in the day-time, and descend on the scale at night.

If you could interpret the sight or the thought of the guardian angels of these two great cities, how different would be their experience during the day from their experience during the night! As they hang poised over the great out-lying Babylon all day, they see in the main, useful industries. They see some violence; they see much craft; they see strifes of selfishness and rivalries of ambition and of pride, to be sure; and for the most part the sins that they see are of this class. But when the sun goes down, and sheeted darkness comes upon the face of the city, how does the whole aspect change! How does the great caldron begin to seethe and bubble with another class of sins! Now how does drunkenness, how does lewdness, how do all the crimes of treachery, pelf, sneaking theft, and burglaries, begin to come forth! And the angel, looking on the sight, sees a spectacle of lower life. The whole temperature is gone down. The kind of deed is changed. And as at night heat disappears with the light, and the temperature sinks physically, so in the community the moral temperature goes down at night.

So much for the effects of darkness and of night. Now for some applications. And at the outset let me make some milder ones.

1. It is a very desirable thing (and this for those whom it may concern; for those that are beginning life)—it is a very desirable thing to begin life with nature, and run parallel to nature. For a man's strength is in the proportion in which he runs parallel with great natural laws, and with God's great providence. He is strong, he goes fast, who goes in the Gulf-stream; and he sails slow who sails against it. And great natural laws are streams that expedite men.

As a general thing, men can control their time; and the time for study and for work is the day; while the time for social recreation and rest is at night. The general rule, though there may be occasional exceptions to it, for every young man and every young maiden entering life, is, *Do your work in the day time.* Do not turn yourself into a stu-

dent at night. The practice has some charms, because we read in history and in literature about the *midnight oil.* The worst oil that a man ever burnt was midnight oil. It wastes society. It not only induces artificial excitement during that late hour just preceding sleep, which makes sleep less wholesome and less nutritive, but in every way deranges a man's habit. If a minister studies late Saturday night, or if he works late at night during all the week, you may be perfectly sure that he cannot be a robust wholesome man all round. I can detect the tendencies induced by habitual night-work. And, although the night, when everything is still, is the only working time for hard-run professional men, frequently, yet working at night is always pernicious, and should never be resorted to except as a choice between evils, even under such circumstances.

I think the judgments formed at night are never so solid and fresh as judgments formed in the morning. If in the morning a man is without clarity, if he is despondent, if he is dull, if he is unnerved, you may be sure that he is living wrong. For the order of nature is, that a man should rise from his bed in the morning as birds rise, singing, and in perfect health. A man rises buoyant, and has his best hours in the early day. For although perhaps the fancy may not be so brilliant in the early day, the judgment is better. The conclusions and determinations which a man forms in the early day, are apt to be sounder and safer than those which he forms at night. Fancy for the night; judgment for the day. And I would say to every young person whom it concerns, Form, if it is a possible thing, the habit of doing your study in the day time, and reserve your nights for lighter tasks, and keep early hours with your bed. You do not profit, (I do not care who your exemplar is,) by departing from the great influences and laws of nature. There is many and many a man that wears out prematurely, because, without one single unvirtuous or vicious habit, he grinds his life out by night-work.

2. I protest against the use of night for social pleasures, to the extent which, in cities and in fashionable circles especially, it is prostituted. Pleasures, even within moral bounds, are not wholesome in the untimely hours of night. The turning of night into day, the creation of artificial lights; the use of the day again, amidst all its glare and din of excitements, for sleep—these things are not wholesome. They are not wholesome either to the body or to the soul.

Men laugh at the old fashioned New England custom of going out to tea at four o'clock in the afternoon, getting home again at seven in the evening, and going to bed at nine; but the men that that custom made were not to be laughed at. The men that are wearing out are city men. It seldom happens that city men breed strong men.

For, the city, like the grindstone, takes off the edge and the very steel from the sword. And the country has to send in its new men all the time. No city could perpetuate its power and maintain its influence, if it were not for the continual recuperation of its populations by the transmission of country-bred men, who have kept right hours and observed wholesome natural laws. They come in to make up for the waste and the consumption that arise from city practices.

Now, it is not wrong in the same sense that burglary is wrong, for a person to go to entertainments at ten o'clock at night; but it is wrong. At ten o'clock the festival begins, and by twelve or one o'clock it is at its height. And then comes the infernal feeding. And all men at night are pigs. At any rate, my observation of the bibulous and gustatory habits of men away from home, with curious viands, is such that I cannot but feel that the lower nature gets the ascendancy.

Have you ever seen men on a steamboat, where the table was spread, stand around the door ready to make a plunge and a rush for the table the moment an opportunity was given? Have you seen how men at parties take pains to get the most favorable situations at the table? Have you seen how men stretch and lean over in order that they may fare the best? Men, too, that are well fed at home, and that do not seem to need any special feeding—have you seen how they gormandize, how they stuff and fill, and forget everything but to eat, and eat, right and left, and eat something of everything—and this at twelve or one o'clock at night? And good men they are—deacons, elders, class-leaders, ministers—all good men! But when a man leaves his home at ten o'clock at night to go out for amusement, and takes his second supper, at one or two o'clock, what would you expect of him but that he should make everything consistent, and the whole abominable mess a violation of natural law? And in the world of fashion they keep this unnatural excitement up to most absurd extents.

By two, or three, or four o'clock they begin to go home; and then they retire. About the time they ought to get up they go to bed. Now comes the restless sleep of the forenoon. And then, about ten or eleven o'clock, dreary, and headachy, and desponding, they get up most dolefully to talk about their enjoyments!

The old fables say that there were creatures—salamanders—that could live in the fire. I believe it. For I have seen persons—men and women—that lived in a round of parties nearly every night for ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years, until they were perfectly drained, perfectly used up, and had to go to Saratoga or Newport to get over pleasure. They had enjoyed themselves so much that they were all run down. Their energies were all wasted. Their vitality was

all gone. Their nerves were unstrung. Their digestion was impaired. Their whole system was marked for disease.

And consider what a disreputable thing this is. Consider what a use it is of one's refinement, civilization, wealth, social position, to make them the instruments for destroying his body, ruining his nerves, taxing and racking and draining his system, and going on every single winter in this preposterous conversion of night into day, and day into night. Talk about a thief being wicked—a man that is habitually practicing such violence, although he does not sin against society, sins against the laws of God in his own body, and will have a day-of-judgment account to give for it. It is an abomination before God, and ought to be an abomination before every decent person.

There have been, in this congregation, many who have sinned in this way unwittingly. I have not been faithful to my duty in this matter. I ought to have told you these things before. But if, after this, the young people of this church carry sitting up at parties to the excess of which I have spoken, I do not mean that it shall be because they are ignorant of what I think about it. I want them to understand distinctly that I regard it as a gross violation. These dancings and feastings and fooleries at night, besides being wicked on the ground of the waste of time, are utterly unpardonable as being a sin against health, and against the great functions of life for which you were created of God. Did he create you to be a thistle-down? Were you born to be butterflies? Were you made to be mere triflers? Is there nothing for yourself, nothing for mankind, nothing for the glory of God, that is to try and task your energies in this life? If you are so using yourselves, or prostituting yourselves, as to turn day into night, and night into day, there will be a burning account for you to render by-and-by. There is many and many a dissipated one that will suffer retribution not only for indulgence in disallowable things, but for indulgence in allowable things in disallowable hours.

I can say these things, when some others could not, because I am known, and want to be known, as a friend of liberty, and a friend of pleasure. I rebuke the young who would turn monks. I do not believe in solitude. I do not believe in melancholy. I believe in gayety and joyousness. And I believe that the closer a man keeps to the laws of nature, the happier he will be, and ought to be. Therefore, being on the side of liberty, though not on the side of license, being on the side of wholesome, manly pleasures, and freedom in the indulgence of them, I stand, and have authority to stand, and say, When you pervert nature in this way, it is utterly wicked and utterly abominable.

3. There is another application which, although partial, is of great range and of supreme importance, addressing itself to doctors, to

guardians, and to parents, chiefly. I refer to the practice of allowing children to go out at night into the streets, if in cities; or, if in the country, allowing children to find their companions at night, and their pleasures at night, away from parental inspection. If I wanted to make the destruction of a child sure, I would give him unwatched liberty after dark. You cannot do a thing that will be so nearly a guarantee of a child's damnation as to let him have the liberty of the city, or the liberty of the town, after nightfall, without your inspection, or the inspection of some person who has the right to govern his conduct. It is invariably true that under such circumstances children will fall under the influence and dominion of persons that will taint their blood; that will taint their imagination; that will untie the bonds of all equitable and just authority; that will make them deceitful, and lead them to seek their pleasures clandestinely. And before you know it, they will be specked, and often rotten to the core.

I do not like to sow the seeds of suspicion in the minds of parents about their children; but there are thousands and thousands of parents in these cities who think, who *know*, that their children "never lie"; and yet their tongue is like a bended bow. They think their children never drink; but there is not a fashionable saloon within a mile of their homes, that the boys are not perfectly familiar with. They think their children never do unvirtuous things; and yet they reek with unvirtue. There are many young men who, when they return to their father's house, are supposed to have been making visits to this or that person. It is a mere guise.

The practice of allowing children to go out at night to find their own companions, and their own places of amusement, may leave one in twenty unscathed, and without danger; but I think that nineteen out of twenty fall down wounded or destroyed. And if there is one thing that should be more imperative than another, it is that your children shall be at home at night; or that, if they are abroad, you shall be abroad with them. There may be things that it is best that you should do for your children, though you would not do them for yourselves; but they ought not to go anywhere at night, to see sights, or to take pleasure, unless you can go with them, until they are grown to man's estate, and their habits are formed. And nothing is more certain than that to grant the child liberty to go outside of the parental roof and its restraints in the darkness of night, is bad, and only bad, and that continually.

Do not suppose that a child is hurt only when he is broken down. I have quite a taste in china cups, and such things. I like a beautiful cup. And I have noticed that when the handle gets knocked off from a cup of mine, that cup is spoiled for me. When I look at it

afterwards I never see the beauty, but always see the broken handle. If I have a beautiful mirror, and it is cracked, it may still answer all the purposes that I want a mirror for, to reveal my beauty; but nevertheless it is spoiled for my eye. There is that crack, and when I look into the glass I never see myself half so much as I see the crack. Its perfectness is gone. In the matter of beauty, a speck or a blemish is more than all besides, and takes away the pleasure of all besides. And it does not require that a child should be broken down, to be made useless by his exposures to temptation. I aver that there are many things which no man can learn without being damaged by them all his life long. There are many thoughts which ought never to find a passage through a man's brain. As an eel, if he were to wiggle across your carpet, would leave a slime which no brush could take off; so there are many things which no person can know, and ever recover from the knowledge of.

There are minions of Satan that go around with hidden pictures and books under the lappels of their coat, showing them to the young, with glozing, lustful, hideous, infernal scenes represented, which once to have seen is to remember, as if they were burned in with the fire of hell. And I do not believe there is a man in my hearing who will not bear testimony, if he ever heard a salacious song, where wickedness and nastiness were sheathed in wit, that he regrets to-day, and will regret to the day of his death, that he ever heard it. There are men that have turned from wickedness who look back with unfailing mortification and regret upon the fact that certain things have happened, and that they know certain things.

I do not believe in bringing up the young to *know life*, as it is said. I should just as soon think of bringing up a child by cutting some of the cords of his body, and lacerating his nerves, and scarring and tattooing him, and making an Indian of him outright, as an element of beauty,—as I should think of developing his manhood by bringing him up to *see life*—to see its abominable lusts; to see its hideous incarnations of wit; to see its infernal wickedness; to see its extravagant and degrading scenes; to see its miserable carnalities; to see its imaginations set on fire of hell; to see all those temptations and delusions which lead to perdition. Nobody gets over the sight of these things. They who see them always carry scars. They are *burned*. And though they live, they live as men that have been burned. The scar remains. And to let the young go out where the glozing courtesan appears; to let them go where the lustful frequenter of dens of iniquity can come within their reach; to let them go where the young gather together to cheer with bad wit; to let them go where they will be exposed to such temptations—why, a parent is insane that will do it. To say, "A

child must be hardened; he has got to get tough somehow, and you may as well put him in the vat, and let him tan"—is that family education? Is that Christian nurture? Is that *bringing a child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?*

I thank God for two things—yes, for a thousand; but for two among many: first, that I was born and bred in the country, of parents that gave me a sound constitution and a noble example. I never can pay back what I got from my parents. If I were to raise a monument of gold higher than heaven, it would be no expression of the debt of gratitude which I owe to them, for that which they unceasingly gave, by the heritage of their body and the heritage of their souls, to me. And next to that, I am thankful that I was brought up in circumstances where I never became acquainted with wickedness. I know a great deal about it; for if I hear a man say A, I know the whole alphabet of that man's life, by which I can imagine all the rest. If I see a single limb, I have the physiologist's talent by which I know the whole structure. But I never became acquainted with wickedness when I was young, by coming in contact with it. I never was sullied in act, nor in thought, nor in feeling, when I was young. I grew up as pure as a woman. And I cannot express to God the thanks which I owe to my mother, and to my father, and to the great household of sisters and brothers among whom I lived. And the secondary knowledge of these wicked things which I have gained in later life in a professional way, I gained under such guards that it was not harmful to me.

If you have children, bring them up purely. Bring them up with sensitive delicacy. Bring them up so that they shall not know the wickedness that is known, unfortunately, by the greatest number of men.

And if there are children that are sometimes impatient of parental restraint, let me say to them, You do not know what temptation you are under; and if, held back by your mother, if, held back by your father, you shall escape the knowledge of the wickedness that is in the world, you will have occasion, by-and-by, to thank God for that, more than for silver, or for gold, or for houses, or for lands.

Keep your children at home nights. Oh! there is many a sod that lies over the child whose downfall began by vagrancy at night; and there is many a child whose heart-breaking parents would give the world if the sod did lie over them. And oh! what a state that is for children to come to, in which the father and the mother dread their life unspeakably more than their death! What a horrible state of things that is, where parents feel a sense of relief in the dying of their children! Take care of your childen at night.

4. As night and darkness are so full of mischief, so in every sanita-

ry work that we undertake in life, we ought to act on these great and acknowledged truths. Broad streets, clean above and below, with an abundance of light, and a judicious police, will do more toward repressing vice (though not toward promoting virtue) in cities, than all the benevolent associations and churches put together. It would be impossible for all the churches in the world to reform against the influence of night.

Therefore, while we preach the Gospel, and while we attempt to reclaim the vicious and the wicked by means of reformatory associations, we ought to join in the application of those great physical laws which interpret life, and explain to us that darkness and circumscription are inevitably full of temptations which common men are not able to rise up against and resist.

Broad open streets, where secrecy is impossible, are of the first importance. Let there be light enough. It is the worst economy in the world to light a city as some of the streets in this city are lighted. I wish the Alderman of the First Ward were in my congregation. I would ask him to go through some of these streets—for instance Pine-apple street, from Hicks to Columbia—and see what a light there is there. There is but one lamp for all that distance, so far as I can see, and darkness reigns well nigh supreme. And in going through the city I have seen many such unlighted streets. If a street is narrow and out of the way, it seems to be thought not worth while to waste gas on it. It is worth while. Every time you multiply gas posts, you save the need of schools and churches. It is lighting these streets, it is taking darkness out of them, that diminishes temptations. And all over the city, not simply as a sanitary measure, but as a moral measure, there ought to be provision made for abundant air and cleanliness and light. Then, with the good example of virtuous men, with the preaching of the Gospel, and with all the agencies of industry, the populations of our cities might be healthy, moral and Christian. But we shall never Christianize cities till we know how to apply natural law and material law in connection with the power of moral influences and the *stimuli* of moral example.

These words which I speak to-night are not simply for those whom they may concern, but for all the teachers of the community. Doctors are ordained to teach men the laws of health. They know better than any others, perhaps, how much morality carries health, and how much immorality carries sickness. And it is for them to teach sanitary measures, and anticipate temptations and sickness. The duty of educators is not simply to teach the text of the books. Their duty is to bring up the young to virtue and honor and immortality; and this duty ought to be imposed upon them. And ministers and philanthropists

also have a duty in this matter. I take to myself blame for not having spoken on this subject before. I know not why I have not. It slipped my thought until circumstances lately brought it to me. But now I bear my testimony. I have examined before you the conditions of bodily health, and pointed out the sources of temptation. And it is the duty of ministers to raise their voices on such subjects. It is their duty not any less to preach dogma and doctrine—there is a time for everything, and so there is for dogma and doctrine; but they ought also to preach the application of these great sanitary laws and their great moral influences to the people.

If all the churches would contrive to make perpetual Lent the year round, I am sure that virtue would flourish and religion would revive in all the members of the churches, and in all the members of the congregations; and we should hear ministers preach—and the public sentiment would corroborate it—that the day is the time for work, and the night is the time for rest. Night for home; or, if it is to be used for purposes of social enjoyment, then it should be used with regard to timely hours. And no man ought to see the middle of the night out of his bed, unless he is called out by works of necessity or of morality. A man should violate Sunday quicker than the twelve o'clock hour. It is well to be in bed at ten o'clock. If our nights could be shortened at one end, and lengthened at the other, it would be better for us. Get up early. Breakfast early. Work early. Use the day for the works of the day, and the night for works of recuperation, and not for works of darkness.

May God grant that we may be *children of light*, not alone in the literal sense in which I have been speaking, but also in the figurative, in the transferred sense, that we may love rectitude, that we may love virtue, that we may love righteousness, that we may love good men, that we may love God, the supreme Goodness, and that we may be drawn by his unspeakable grace into that land where there shall be no night, but where the clear shining of his face shall be daylight forever and forever.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We gather ourselves again around thy feet, our Heavenly Father. We look up again into thy gracious face. We rejoice that there is no terror there for those who have learned to know thee. Thou lookest with peace and with joy upon us; and thou seest in us, not what is, but that which is to be when thy grace shall have wrought out the old, and brought in the new. And we rejoice that there is a refuge; that there is hope and rescue; that He that is most offended is most placable; and that the Being who is holiest and purest is the most patient and lenient with those that are impure and unholy. Though thou canst not sin, thou hast been *tempted in all points like as we are.* Thou knowest the burdens of temptation, the trials, which men go through. The secret springs of difficulty in the way of life are plain to thee. And standing in our midst, bearing our form, upon thee has beaten sorrow, and all the stream of sadness has set against thee in vain. Thou hast endured; and thou art able not only to pity, but to succor, those that are tempted; and we are drawn near to thee by this fellow feeling. And since thou hast been in our place, and borne our nature, and known our trial and trouble, and art willing to help us, why should we not come to thee? O thou Nurse of all that is good! O thou Teacher of all that is wise! O thou Captain of our salvation! to thee we come to put ourselves under thy care, sure that thou art interested in us, and that thy heart engages itself in our behalf. And why should we need friendship, with whom is God? Why should we need hope, upon whose hearts thou dost pour the twilight of thy hope? Why should we be solitary and alone, and discouraged in our loneliness, since thou art with us? All things are for our sake. The blessedness of thy life, working in providence, working in divine channels of grace, working by nature, working by thy heart and by thy spirit, working by all things that surround us, is leading us to the heavenly manna —to the heavenly spirit —to that blessedness which shall only pass from glory to glory.

And now we thank thee for any steps which we have taken; for any sins which we have overcome; for any knowledge which has enabled us to rise higher in our estimate of life, and to take higher standards. We thank thee for all the things that are good, or that in any wise point toward goodness in ourselves. By the grace of God we are what we are. All our good works thou hast wrought in us —to thy name be the honor and the glory. And we commit ourselves still to thy fatherly care. As thou hast begun, so continue and end thy work in our souls.

We pray for the prayerless. We pray for the children of parents that have gone home to glory. We pray for those that have been instructed all their life long, but with whom wisdom has brought forth no fruit.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that thou wilt make the word of truth sharper than a two-edged sword. Search out the hidden thoughts of men. Follow those that are gone from thee. Both by fear and by stripes make manifest thy fidelity.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be heart-searchings; that there may be many that shall be pricked in the heart, and turned from wickedness to righteousness; from darkness to light, from the service of Satan to the service of the living God.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt accept our thanksgiving for the work of good that thou art doing in so many hearts; in the hearts of so many that have been brought forward into the Christian life. And may their numbers be doubled. We pray that thou wilt still go on ripening more and more the precious seed that has been sown. We thank thee for the courage which we have in that the Gospel is not dead, and that the power of God is yet in the letter and in the spirit of truth.

We pray that thy servants may everywhere be encouraged both to sow

and to reap. May they be bold in the service of God. May they not fear the face of man. May they go forth untrammeled by corrupt customs. We pray that they may have that wisdom which shall make them wiser than the maxims of selfishness. We pray that thou wilt grant to all those that are walking in the Christian life greater fruition; greater blessedness; more light; more experience of gladness; songs in the night, if they be in adversity; testimony, if they be in prosperity, that God can keep the soul even in prosperity.

Build up thy kingdom everywhere. Unite all thy people. More and more cordially may they work together for the things which respect their common Lord. Make haste to fulfill the promises which are delayed and unfulfilled respecting the final glory. O Lord Jesus! wait not. Advance thy banner. Bring forth the light, we beseech of thee, of that long year—of the thousand years—which shall stand upon the earth. Grant, we pray thee, that the day may hasten when sin and sorrow shall flee away, and joy and gladness take possession of the earth.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, thy blessing upon the word of warning which we have spoken. Grant, we pray thee, that the young may be cautioned, and that those who are in charge of them may take caution. Grant, we pray thee, that those may be rescued who are without care, and without any who look after their souls. Pity the outcast. Pity the needy. Deliver them from those that would destroy them. And we pray that thou wilt bless more and more the teachings of the sanctuary. More and more let thy Gospel be made known to men, with healing power. We ask these things, not because we are worthy, but in the adorable name of our Saviour, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

THE TRUE ECONOMY OF LIVING.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it."—MATT. x. 39.

We find the same teaching repeated in the same Gospel. In the 16th chapter substantially the same phraseology is employed. In the 25th verse of that chapter, it is said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it."

It may be supposed that our Saviour, from the current impression of his simplicity and truthfulness and straightforwardness, would not be addicted to parabolical teaching; but his style is eminently characterized by paradox, as was also his life. He was not a being made up of straight lines alone. Born in beauty, his life was full of those curves, those unexpected ways, those hidings of himself, as it were, peering out to excite surprise. He had so many ways that were provocative, that excited expectation, that won attention, that fascinated, that wherever he went he was the one man of observation. And we see traces of it in the Scriptures which are reported from him. In his life, (although but a very small portion, a mere fragment, of the life of Christ is recorded, and in our hands) you will find this same paradoxical utterance repeated again, and apparently under other circumstances, as recorded in the 12th Chapter of John's Gospel, and the 25th verse.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

This is said immediately following another figure:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Now, it is not to be supposed, because it is contrary to the tenor of Christ's teaching otherwhere, that we are taught to hate life in the very literal and more obvious sense of that phrase. Just such another parallel instance occurs where we are told that we are not worthy of Christ if we do not forsake father and mother, brother and sister, hus-

SUNDAY MORNING, April 24, 1870. LESSON: 1 TIM. VI. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 260, 688, "Shining Shore."

band and wife. And another rendering of it, in another Gospel, is, that if we do not hate them and come to Christ we are not worthy of him. But, certainly, the Saviour does not mean that men shall hate their parents, and all their connections; or, that coming to him is in every instance to involve the sacrifice of all men's affections and relations. It is simply a mode by which relative affection is indicated. Our love for God must be first; and if any other affection comes in collision with it, then that other affection must be sacrificed. The love of God must be free. Under that all other affections may be justified; but there must be no rivalry with it. And so here we are not in a literal sense to hate our lives. That would contravene the teaching of Scripture, as well as of life itself, and produce infinite confusion in the ideas of men.

We are, nevertheless, by this very strong language, taught that there may be an ideal of life and a form of living which we are to tread under foot; and it is to the illustration of this that I shall address myself.

The order of values in the nature of man are in an inverse order to the development of his powers, and all their values. Men are born into this world little animals. There is no other animal born so low as man. There is no other animal of which there is so little in its beginnings. There is nothing that has to wait so long and travel so far before it finds itself, as the human animal. It would seem as though the shorter the time of existence of any creature on earth, the more perfect it is at its start; as though, having no time to get right, it therefore had to be made right at the beginning. And the seed of human life is put as remote as possible from the point of maturity; and then it is, by successive experiences, to be developed to that maturity.

Man, as the highest animal organization of the globe, has the longest term, not simply of life, but of development. And in developing, he develops first a lower class of faculties, purely physical. A babe is a mere thing of suction. The lowest, the least, is it, of all created beings. If it were not for the prophecy of love, if it were not for the transfiguration which maternal hope puts upon it, we could scarcely think of anything less attractive than a new-born babe. And yet, there is nothing on the globe so precious to the heart of love—not for what it is, but for all that it is to be when it shall have come to itself. Through days and weeks and months this little hope of life to come, this little mass of nothing, lies in the mother's arms, waiting for liberty to be. And as it begins to develop, and comes out of the lower periods of life into some degree of automatic action and experience, the physical is developed fastest and most.

And first are developed the appetites or faculties which have to do

with our physical condition, and which are ministrant to it—the feeding instincts, the nutritive instincts, by which the body is to be built up—that body in which the whole experiment of life is to be tried.

As the child develops beyond this point, the order is, next, the development, in simple, of its incipient passions. But more rapidly we develop these *engineering instincts*, if I may so call them. Men call them *passions*, on account of their excess and abuse. Those working powers by which men strive with nature, and strive for success in the bodily life, begin to develop the force-elements in men. They come in, perhaps it may be said, the second or third in the order.

And then come the higher social relations, by which men begin to please each other; all the affinities by which society affiliates; by which the household is founded; by which men have commerce with men; by which all finer elements begin to help each other.

Then, beyond that, and afterwards, in the more perfect development, come reason and the imagination. But the real growth and strength of the reason comes after the development of the passions and the affections.

And last of all, the latest, and with most waiting, and most working, and most suffering, comes the development of the moral nature of man, and particularly the spiritual-moral—that is to say, that part whose food is invisible realities; whose food is the remote, the impalpable, the unsensuous.

This is the order of time, and it is the inverse of the order of ultimate importance. In the beginning of life, the most important thing is that the child shall have a good body; but at the end of life a good body is not the most important thing, by any means.

In the beginning of life it is important, next, that the child should learn how to engineer its little body in the midst of the elements surrounding him. But when one has become ripe, these engineering traits and endowments fall into a relatively lower position.

When birds build their nests in spring, as they are now doing out of doors, the most important thing that they can do is to build those nests, as every robin knows, and every blue-bird knows, and every sparrow knows. But by-and-by the nest will be filled with eggs; and everybody knows that the eggs will be worth more than the nest. And by-and-by the eggs will give place to the young fledgelings. And everybody knows that these fledgelings, homely as they are, all mouth, will be vastly more important than the eggs. Then by-and-by the bird gets its feathers, and flies away. And who cares now what becomes of the egg-shells, or the nest, or anything else that is left behind? The bird is what has come of all these things. They are the instruments by which the bird was built up. But now that they have fulfilled their

office, they are not good for anything—not even for next year: the uselessness of a "last year's bird's nest" is proverbial.

So it is in the beginning of human life, to a large extent. The figure of Christ is to be taken with allowance, and not with extreme application. The things that are indispensable to start the little creature in life, are, at the time, of transcendent importance; but when it is once started, carried along, developed. brought to a maximum, then those instruments that were of prime importance, sink lower and lower until they become absolutely insignificant. And all the way through life there is this phenomenology—there is this lower physical life, this intermediate, engineering life, and this higher and more intellectual life—as you might say, three lives wrapped up in the one.

The order of development, I have said, is not the order of value. The value is relative to the period. But, after all, a true manhood in Christ Jesus is the ideal at which human life is aiming. It is that which we are taught man is created for, and which if he loses he loses everything.

In the lowest materialistic idea of life, drawn from the lower orders, the end of life seems to be, to be born, to eat, to propagate, to die, and then to do it right over and over again, forever and ever. Nothing comes of it. There is no extension, there is no generation of power, beyond the simple capacity of maintaining in the world the series of existences that have filled it. And so we find that the insect family never get beyond what they were. They are born perfect. They run through a short line. And the next generation are just like them. And in a thousand years there is not one single step of appreciable progress made.

It is not so in the human family. As we go up, more and more is added to life. As we rise from the lower forms of organized existence, new organs appear, and with them new functions. More time is involved in their development. They have a more complicated sphere of activity. Their experiences are more complex. The climax in this line of development is reached in man, who begins lowest, as we have said, who takes the longest time to get a-going, who averages the greatest time in this world, who has the greatest store of permanent acquisitions within the range of our knowledge, and who, above all, and characteristically, secures at last what we have no evidence is secured anywhere below—a manhood that is worth preserving.

When Van Mons would have new pears better than the old ones, he sowed thousands and thousands of seeds of wildings; and when they came up, to expedite the process, to hasten maturity, he took grafts and put them into old trees. And among all the pears that he got there was not one that was worth eating. But they were a great im-

provement on the wildings. So he took the seeds of these advanced ones, and sowed them; and when they came up, he grafted them also into the old trees to expedite their maturation. And among the second generation there were none that were worth saving. But this generation was a great advance on the first. And he took the seeds of the last growths, and sowed them. And when by-and-by he had carried them through four or five generations, he began to get Flemish pears, which were better than any that he had known before. And he said, "Now I have got something that is worth having." And these he propagated and carried on.

This will stand as a sort of illustration of the order of creation. It would seem as though the divine creative thought of existence stood in innumerable forms. And in the first stage it was worth what it *was* worth. It lived and died, and that was the end of it. Then higher and better than that, but not worth keeping, are other gradations through which we pass in coming to man. And until we come to man's estate, to this higher race of animals, we cannot find any intimation in the Word of God that there is such a thing as saving them over, preserving them. But when one, by the wise application of his own faculties, and of the knowledge which he acquires through those faculties, knows how to carry himself up into manhood in Christ Jesus, there is immortality for him. Then, at last, nature has reached the point in which it is worth saving and carrying over into the other life.

It is precisely this developed ideal manhood that the Gospel holds out, which we are aiming at. And all the stages preceding it are but so many steps ascending to it; so many organizations ministering to it; so many instruments relative to it. And if men secure it, they secure the end of their own existence. If they fall short of it, they fall short of everything. For it is in this manhood that immortality inheres--this salvable manhood, which is something more than the engine of this mortal state. There is a nature that has been so developed and trained that it has something in it besides that which eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and overcomes, and fights, and strives with passionate earnestness; a nature that has in it stores of elements and powers that fit it for the communion of higher beings, and of God himself, for evermore. All through the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is this last communion that is represented as the true life. It so transcends every other, so much better is it than everything else, that Christ in speaking of it calls it *the* life, knowing all the time that men call other things the life—eating and drinking, and pleasures. And taking these two ideas of life, and uniting them, he plays upon them, one after another. "He that will save his life"—that is, the lower one—"shall lose it"—that is, the other one. He that would save

his life, he that will not risk anything for it, he that is all the time looking after the lower life, and not the higher, shall lose the higher. He that wants to cultivate himself, and wants to make himself happy, and wants to live in the present moment; he that wants now, now, now, to be made munificent, and cares nothing for then, then, then, shall lose the thing for which the race was created—the immortal life.

Now, men make the order of nature and of time the order of their value. Men perpetually tend to live for the things which make the body strong, skillful, wise, and enjoying. They tend to overestimate the body. They tend to overestimate present pleasures, present power, the secular development of man, and to underestimate all those yet higher developments and elements for which the secular was created as instrumental. They live *by sight*, as it is said. They live by the senses. They live sensuously, or for physical enjoyment. Whenever either one or the other is to be sacrificed, men sacrifice the higher, the impalpable, the least immediately productive things. If it be honor or profit, profit is preserved, and honor is given up. If it be truth or influence and station, truth must be waived. Men seem to feel, and act substantially as if they felt, that, having been created with powers in this world, it was lawful, right and manly for one to put those powers into use, and by them carry himself to any attainable degree of strength, and wealth, and pleasure; and that he is not to be interrupted, or resisted, or overruled by any conceptions of right and wrong, of purity and impurity, or of manhood. So that in the great battle of life, generally speaking, the senses prevail against the insensuous. The visible is victorious, and the invisible is sacrificed.

The fact, however, is, and is declared to be, that in every respect, the higher elements of human life are so superior to all below them, that it may be truly said in each element, that he who takes the lower loses the whole. I firmly believe that the higher wisdom, the moral wisdom, though it takes it longer to ripen and work, is more profitable for the world that now is, than the lower wisdom.

If you consider that man is at the bottom an animal, midway a citizen, and at the top Christian or divine, I hold that the wisdom of the citizen is better than the wisdom of the animal. Thought is better than cunning. The animal is cunning. It does not think. But men think; and thinking is better than cunning for the process of life. But there is such a thing as intuition, which belongs to the higher life, and which is as much better than thinking, as thinking is better than cunning.

Men, in the great battle of life, say, "We cannot conduct life successfully and still live by the highest rules." I aver, contrariwise, that there is no way in which human life can be built up so firmly, so

broadly, so impregnably, and so bountifully in joy, as by the wisdom which comes from the highest moral intuitions and the highest moral truths—in other words that the Spirit of Christ is not a Spirit that shall sweeten a man's closet any more than his shop or store. The laws of truth, of sensitive honor, and of the highest Christian spirituality, are applicable to the commercial aspects of life, or to the dealings of men in civil life; and they are as much more profitable, in the long run, than thought or cunning, as they are finer, and truer, and nobler, and higher. And yet, many reject this higher wisdom. They do not believe in it. They laugh it to scorn in the street, over the counter, in the caucus, in the legislative hall, and on field of political strife. "All things are lawful," men say, "in business, in war and in politics." The amount of it is, they think all things are lawful everywhere. They think a man has a right to scramble, and to go by slippery ways, or any kind of ways, in order to succeed. It is supposed that however low the aim or ambition, it is lawful for a man to use every part of himself, without any other limitation than the average public sentiment requires in the community in which he lives. But I aver that a man can succeed in the great courses of life if he be strong enough, and patient enough, and willing to wait long enough. If a man will act from the wisdom of purity, and the wisdom of grace in his soul, he will be a better manager of business or pleasure, he will be a better economist or householder, and he will be a better civilian or politician, than if he goes by the suggestions of worldly experience and worldly wisdom.

This thought might be run out in many details.

There are those who think that religion denies pleasure to men. No. The condemnation of pleasure is, that men select so poor an article. God made men to live upon pleasurable excitement. Every faculty has this quality as a result of its divine origin. There is not a faculty in the human soul that is not made to have the inspiration of pleasure in it. And you cannot act in any sphere of life, from the lowest to the highest, without it.

But the quality of pleasure goes up; and as man rises toward his true spiritual manhood, pleasures, although they may not be so impetuous, are not so harsh, are not so intense, are of a finer quality, are of longer duration, and are more harmonizing. They admit of fellowship one with another, so that the average of pleasures in the higher life is far greater than in the intermediate or the lower and animal life. Does any person suppose that one man reaps as much satisfaction from a wild night of debauch and wassail, however exhilarating it may be, as another man does from the indulgence of his pure and virtuous social affections? He thinks for the hour that he does; but as he looks back, and compares it with higher experiences, and interprets the one

and the other, he knows that the higher affections really beget in him more of pleasure. When men look back on their life they are more likely to form right judgments than when they look forward to their future experiences.

When, therefore, men are dissuaded from pleasure, it is lower pleasure that is meant. We are supposed, in this world, to be happy; but we are to take our happiness from growth into a higher manhood, and from the normal use of the moral elements that are in us. And he that aims at lower pleasure forfeits true pleasure. He would save his pleasure, and he loses it.

That which is true of pleasure, is true of praise. All men love praise—or ought to. It is wholesome. Bad as it is in ordinary life, it was meant to serve an admirable purpose. There is no criminality in seeking praise; but there is great criminality in seeking such praise as good men ought not to want. That praise which comes from the exhibition of lower traits; that praise which springs from the unknowing and from those that praise from their lower nature, is not to be sought. If one has a large conception of manhood, of what he ought to be, and then is praised by those who understand what that is, he has a right to enjoy praise. But praise for his lower faculties, or praise for his animal life, or praise for things which he does not possess, but only pretends to have—how wretched is that! He that will have a vulgar and uneducated love of praise will not have the other But he that despises anything like incense to his ignorance, or incense to his pretenses, or incense to his position in society; he that has a moral element which scorns the untruth and the baseness of such praise, and aims at something higher than man's applause, and loves the praise of God more than the praise of men—he may lose praise at present, but he will gain it hereafter. The higher will, in the long run, rule the lower.

That which is true of praise is true of power. The desire to accomplish in life is a normal desire. It is a noble ambition. I am not one that ever preaches against ambition. I preach against corrupt, false, base and low ambition. I would to God that men had more, a good deal more, ambition, if it were only aimed in the right direction, and sought the right things. It is the want of an ideal of something better and greater that keeps men so low; that holds them down to such vulgarity; that destroys so many men in the making. If a man desires power without any regard to its moral quality, and without any regard to what it costs; if a man seeks the lowest and the commonest power, and gives up everything for it that is demanded—gives up his conscience; gives up his principle; gives up his time; gives up his delicate feelings; gives up domestic life—he will have power. Low,

dirty-handed power will he have. But he will lose true power. He buys corrupt, low and mean power at the price of sacrificing that which is really permanent and thoroughly moral.

With these illustrations and openings, I trust that I have sufficiently given you an insight into the truth and teaching of our Master, to justify the applications that I shall make.

1. Self-denial, and the seeming deprivation which men make in being good in this life, are only investments which come back to them, by-and-by, with interest. And here let me say, in the first place, that when we preach religion to men; when we say to men, "If you are to become Christians you must give up this and that, you must not meddle with such and such things," there is a vague impression that religion imposes certain arbitrary conditions upon a man, and that he who goes into the communion of the Christian church is to be shut off from pleasures and licenses and indulgences. They do not know why. They merely know this: If you believe, you shall be saved; if you do not, you shall be damned. And in order not to be damned, they are willing to be saved. And if that is the price that they must pay for salvation, they will pay it, though they wish it was not required. They would like to enjoy all the pleasures which are within their reach, and they would like to do those things which are calculated to contribute to their present enjoyment.

Now, there is nothing arbitrary about it. Whatever experience has shown to be in the way of true moral education, we forbid men; but whatever thing in this world God made to be good, is good to the Christian, provided he can hold it in consistence with the development of true character.

I am a teacher, and in my school I have twenty-five pupils. I allow them to play until nine o'clock, when my school comes in; but I insist upon it that they shall not play a moment after that time. I say to them, "You must leave off your play and come in at nine o'clock." But is it because I do not like play, or because I think it is bad? Is it anything more than this: that I am satisfied that by study they will lay up a stock of future enjoyment which they cannot get by play? If the child is taught to derive pleasure from higher sources, he will have in store ten times as much as he would if I suffered him to play all the time.

And when religion comes to men, does it come draping them in gloom, and making every one of them a monk, and forbidding the pleasures of this life as though they were in themselves wrong? Does religion teach us to hate the body as though it were hateful? Nothing of the kind. Religion merely says, "Develop the highest manhood, and keep everything else in subordination; but sacrifice nothing. Only

keep the whole household and the economy of your manhood in such an order that the highest things shall be highest, and the intermediate things intermediate, and the lowest things lowest, and let that principle of arrangement and subordination be maintained. And whatever a man has to give up, it is nothing but a lower faculty giving up to a higher one. It is nothing but a lower good being supplanted by a higher. Whenever a man begins to live a Christian life, what is called self-denial is simply listening to the inspiration of a niger truth or a higher motive, and suppressing the inspiration of a contrary lower motive, and holding it down for the sake of something that is higher.

A man puts weights into one scale and commodities into the other. If one scale goes down, the other goes up. And so in weighing things in life the mind is a balance. You cannot have everything at the same time. Especially you cannot have contraries at the same time. Therefore you choose between the one and the other. You reject some things, not because they are absolutely evil, but because they are not so good as other things, and you cannot have both.

"Be angry and sin not." It is a duty to be angry; but then, a man must be angry in such a way and at such times that he shall have serve a generous purpose. It is a shame for a man to get angry selfishly; and it is a shame for a man not to become gloriously magnanimously angry. If a man does you a wrong, and calls you names, do not get angry. You ought to live so high that no man can throw dirt up to where you are. No man can in any way insult you, if you live as you ought to live. Do not get angry at what anybody says to you. But if some poor unbefriended person is being abused to his damage, and is suffering, and you stand by and know it, get angry not for your own sake, but for his. Get angry for a principle. Get angry for generosity. Get angry for your conscience—no, there is too much anger for men's consciences already in the world; but get angry for love. "Be angry and sin not;" and then you will hardly need to have the other part of the text quoted—"let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

And in the matter of forebearance, there is this same element to be kept in mind. If you forbear, it is for the sake of something nobler and higher. And all self-denial is in the nature of seeking something better and nobler.

Here are two men. They are heirs each to ten thousand dollars—just enough to ruin a man: not enough to make him careful, but enough to tempt him to stop industry. One says, "I will make the most of my money." And he buys his fast horses, and buys his fast dogs, and buys his fast friends; and his friends and dogs and horses are of about the same value! And he rides and plays and stuffs, and stuffs

and plays and rides; and there is not a single nerve in his body that is not kept red-hot. And it takes but about ten or twelve months to run through ten thousand dollars, provided a man is going to be "happy," and happy all the time. And after the ten thousand dollars are gone, and he is out of pocket, out of clothes, out of character, out of friends, out of horses, out of dogs, out of every thing, there he stands, poor, miserable, spoiled—utterly spoiled.

The other man takes his ten thousand dollars, and, when this young gay son of pleasure is blossoming on the road, the observed of all fool-observers, says, "I cannot afford these things." "Why?" it is said to him, "you have ten thousand dollars." "I know I have," he says, "but I am going to invest it where it will come back to me doubled and quadrupled. I am young, and I have health, and I do not need so much excitement or prodigality. Now, while I am strong and vigorous, I am able to forego these stimulations; to live without them. And by the time I am in the middle of life, and going down on the other side, I am determined to have enough to keep me comfortably. I am going to deny myself in the present for the sake of the future; and therefore I cannot afford horses and hounds and companions and salacious pleasures." What is he doing? He is denying himself in order to lay up his money so that he shall have it when he needs it more than he does at present. It is not so much a denial as it is an investment which he can avail himself of in mid-life. Then he shall have all that pleasure which the other man pines after and longs for, but has squandered, and shall not find again.

And when we urge men to virtue and heroism, and say to them, "Bear the yoke; carry the cross; deny yourselves," what do we mean? Looking at the lower faculties, and seeing that they are trying to make you live for the lower life, for the *now*, for the things that perish in the using, we say, No, no, do not live that life. Do not give your youth, your vigor, to that which perishes. Direct your ambition to something nobler; something larger; something richer; something more lasting; something that God shall like when he looks upon it, and of which he shall say, "It shall be immortal."

2. Men who do live in the spirit of Christ's philosophy must throw themselves wholly into such a life as this. It is one of those things that cannot be done by halves. Nor can it be done by feeble and weak ways. It is by going with enthusiasm into the higher life that men reap its benefits, and escape the thrall of the lower one. If one wishes the comfort of truth he must not be, every day, debating with himself, "Shall I or shall I not prevaricate?" A man that is all the time studying the casuistry of telling the truth, and the casuistry of honor, cannot be true, and cannot be honorable. Can virtue afford casuistry?

Can the sanctity of chastity afford philosophizing casuistries? It can not. There are many things which a pure nature cannot suffer even to be suggested or raised as questions. It is so with truth-speaking. "Shall I profitably lie?" The very suggestion is treason. A man that means to be an honorable man must go over soul and body to the truth in such a way that the thought never comes up whether he shall or shall not. There cannot be two sides to things of this sort.

That which is true in these familiar illustrations of higher life, is more and more true the higher you ascend. If you mean to live for your true manhood, and for your immortality, it will not do for you to live by half measures. You must give your whole soul to the great and sublime end of living with God forever and forever. You must rank everything as relative to that end. It is work for every man's endeavor, and it must have every man's endeavor.

If self-denial, therefore, in you, is earnest, if it is bold, if it is almost unthinking; if men go into the work of religion, the work of right-living, the work of manhood, as a warrior goes into battle, then it becomes easy. Then the conflict which the apostle likens to that physical warfare in which the excitement and wild exhilaration are such that the soldier does not feel his wounds, nor notice his fatigue, nor mind his circumstances—that conflict becomes easy. That which we know to be the case in the lower life in this respect, is still more so in the higher life, where a man gives himself to it wholly, with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. A man that means to live religiously, and puts his whole power into it, lives easily, and no other man can live easily except the man who gets momentum in a moral life.

3. Men are to be measured, not by the scale of folly, as folly measures in this world, but by God's everlasting scale of manhood; and we cannot tell who are prosperous and who are not prosperous in this world by the worldly measure. Who are the prosperous men in this world? Are they the men who are the biggest, and weigh the most in the scales? Are they the men that have the most power in their muscles, whose bones are as flint, and whose muscles are as steel, and who have all skill? Do you suppose there are any pugilists in New York, or anywhere else, that enjoy as much in a whole year as I enjoy in a day? I laugh them to scorn. I squander more joy than they have, in mere wanton mirthfulness. What is there in the pugilist? A few coarse, brawling passions. Out of them, wholly, he obtains his enjoyment. What has he? What a harp has which has one bass-string left, and nothing more. From that frog-croaking string he draws all his music. But I have forty strings, from every one of which proceeds a separate tone. And all this enjoyment that I have is infinitely

more than his mere animal enjoyment. Large as he is, and easily as he could thrash me, I thrash him every moment. I live in my reason, my taste, my imagination, and my moral nature. And I crow over him; I triumph over him. Everything that is in me triumphs over him. A big man, large, free, with the spirit of God in him—what is he like? And the poor, vulgar, base man—what is he like? The animal man is like a frog that sits on the edge of a morass, and croaks one note, one note, one note, and whose life consists in plumping into the mud, and getting out again, and croaking, croaking.

And what is true of a man, opened up all the way through, clear to the highest spiritual realms? Broad as the creation is he, and his faculties are like birds that sit in the tops of trees, and, when the morning comes and wakes them, sing, each one in its own way, thousands of them filling the air above and all the earth, and making the very dew wink brighter, and look sweeter. Such is a large man, full of joy from top to bottom.

It is said, "Christians are happy. God makes them happy." God makes every man happy who knows how to play on himself. Every man is full of music; but it is not every man that knows how to bring it out. I might live in the house with this organ all my life; but if I did not understand music, and did not know how to play, being where the organ was would do me no good. Most men are magnificent organs, but they do not know how to play, and they amuse themselves by whistling through the pipes that are in them; and instead of developing the true nature that God put in them, and developing the true purposes which God had in their creation, they spoil themselves for this life because they are unmindful of the other true and higher life.

Nay, who are the prosperous men in this world? Are they the men who have the most worldly *eclat?* No. A man's enjoyment in this world does not lie in your eyes, nor in my eyes. It is not what we think that makes a man happy.

I have in thought a man that holds in his hands almost the ways of life, and the thoroughfares of the nation. He is not bad, as the world goes. He is well nigh unlimited in his control of funds. With two or three others he could almost buy the continent. And men think he is a wonderful man. Yes, in many respects he is. But the question is as to his prosperity. Let us open him up, and see what wonderful thing is in him. Have you the key to this man? Yes, I have the golden key. I go into one chamber. It is called *taste.* There is not a window in it. Neither is there a carpet, nor a picture, nor an instrument of music in it. Shut up the door of that room. I go into another room, called *honor.* It is a cold, dreary, stone-wall passage, dripping with moisture. Shut up the door of that room. It is not

tenanted. I go on and open the door of *conscience*, as it is called. What is that down there? Why, it is a wretch lying on a heap of rotten straw, all but dead. It raises its head, and says, "I *was* conscience; what is left of it I am." Shut up the door of this sad room. I look into another chamber—that of *faith*. Well, this was an apartment. It is spacious and lofty; it is domed, and has a large, long opening to the sky. It is constructed as if some instruments were to have been here. Behold, here is astronomical machinery, designed to sweep the heavens. But nobody is here to use it. The room is desolate. There is no faith here. Shut it up. And so I go on from place to place, and through chamber after chamber; and every one of them is unfurnished, dreary, full of unpleasant sights and sounds.

Let us go down to where the man lives. Let us go down where selfishness and avarice dwell. Now we begin to find that the apartments are occupied. They are large, and in them are vaults filled full of unused gains. Yes, selfishness is strong, and pride is strong, and the animal life is strong. And all that is social, all that is sweet, all that is generous, and all that is divine, is utterly lacking, and utterly gone.

There is that prosperous man. Now come with me. Here is old Janet. She had a love affair, the boys say, when she was about seventeen years old, and somehow got jilted. And she never was quite the same afterwards. She always refused company. Well, what has she been doing since that time? Oh! she was kind of studying till her sister was married; and then she went to live with her, and has lived with her ever since. And what has she been doing? Well, she has been taking care of her sister's children. A dependent, is she? Yes, she is to a certain extent dependent on her sister. And she is bringing up the youngsters? Yes, she devotes herself to the care of her sister's children.

Let us go through her heart—for I have the key to that, also. The first apartment is *sweet contentment*. Everything in it is tranquil. There is a low sound, as of music. You know not whence it comes. We pass through chamber after chamber. At last we enter the chamber of love. Oh! how radiant everything is! What pictures there are hanging upon the walls! How many there are that resemble the portraiture of friends! And some there are that seem to look back to friends that are gone. We step out from the room of love into the room of faith. These rooms are adjoining, and the door between them is never closed. They throw light into each other. And how bright are these upper chambers of the soul! Perpetual joy reigns there, morning, noon, and night. Come near, and you will find that this woman's heart is full of peace and gladness.

What is she doing? She is living for others. She is raising up

these little children. She is like the fabled eagle that is said to have plucked the feathers from its own breast to shield its young. She, as it were, takes her own heart and soul out to make a nest for these fledglings. And though they are not her own, she loves them better, and suffers more for them, and prays for them more, than the mother. Outwardly she seems to live solitary; but God, and the angel band that watch over her, see that she lives inwardly full of the sweetest content, and the most blessed and joyful hope.

Now, I put this old Janet over against the millionaire, and ask you which is the most prosperous. One has all the body and all the pelf, and the other all the soul and all the heaven. Which would you rather be? As long as you are here in the church you would rather be Janet, but as quick as you get out of the door there you would rather be this man.

Who are the prosperous men? The men that enjoy the most. The men that enjoy all through. Who are they that enjoy all through? The men that take God's sunlight on top, and make their life radiant from the top to the bottom. The men that have the indwelling of God's spirit; the men that are sanctified, and that, from their topmost feelings to their lower ones are at rest—they are the men that are capable of enjoying most. He is the prince, not who wears the crown outside, but who wears the crown inside. And he is the rich man, not who carries money, but who carries that which buys what money cannot. He is the man that has the fullest life who seems outwardly to have the worst of life, to those that are not instructed to look at him. Let him, therefore, that would have life, aim high, and he shall have it. But if he aims low he shall lose it.

4. This leads me to speak of the hollow and rotten success of the generation of men who have crept into high places of the state and the nation, who dazzle the eyes of men, who heap up riches, who are more or less powerful, who walk in a vain show, and who are deluding the minds of men, and making young men think that there is no use in moral principle, and no use in scruples—that it is only the bold hand and unscrupulous heart that succeed in this world. There is a state of abounding wickedness which is alarming.

Among the bad effects of our civil war, which in the name of God we will resist and slay, (though it also brought about many good effects, that are going to do much toward the regeneration of this nation,) is that most unbounded ambition for money which is breaking out on every side, so that it would seem as though there were almost no barriers; as though nothing could withstand its touch. And old honesty, and old trust, and old scruples, and old-fashioned honor, seem likely to go down. Upright and honorable men are driven into obscurity, and the high

places are held, and the laws are made and administered, by men who pervert official trusts in such a way as to put virtue to shame, and make vice triumphant. The condition of our cities is very rotten; and the worst of it is, that when there is exposure of corruption in officials and courts and legislatures, the moral and Christian sentiment of the community is scarcely shocked, and does not rebound; and still the same men go back again by the votes of those very men who are said to be the conservators of the community. And this state of things has been induced very largely by that "love of money" which "is the root of all evil."

Now, I have no uncertainty about this. It is not going to continue. These men are rotten; and they are not going to prosper. Do you want to hear their portraits described? Why, there is a picture-gallery here that has more portraits in it than you ever dreamed of. See if you cannot recognize some men that do not live a thousand miles from you!

"I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

If he had lived with us, he would have had lots of sights on that subject.

"For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men."

Oh! it is such a plague to be virtuous! It is an annoyance to a great many people.

"Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?"

Atheism and corruption go hand in hand.

"Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning."

Now comes the rebound.

"If I say, I will speak thus: behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedest them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."

Wickedness is not the normal condition of the earth. Righteousness is God's law; and the law of rectitude is as absolute and as imperative as any material and physical law. And men that expect to prosper, and to maintain prosperity at the expense of moral laws, are

just as foolish as men who expect to violate the laws of the brain and the lungs and the stomach, and still be healthy. It is but for a day. It is a vain show. And let no man be deluded into supposing that it makes no difference how he lives. If that is life, lose it. If you are obliged to lose your life in order to maintain your manhood, lose the life and save the manhood; and in the long run you will find that the manhood to preserve which seems to require the casting away of every thing, will bring back more of the world than you could get otherwise. You will have the life which now is, as well as that which is to come.

5. All that are seeking good by worldly ways; all that are seeking their whole good in the world; all that are employing this scene of time, this experiment of probationary mortal life, in such a way that they shall have the labor, the toil, and not the remuneration nor the result, are included under this general truth of which I have been speaking. There are multitudes of men that do not live wisely even for this world. They use up everything in childhood which should have been distributed along the whole of their life. But there are some who use their childhood and youth wisely, and lay up for manhood; and so they save the whole of their life now, by that very economic experience which has led you to economize the forces of early life, and middle life, for the sake of the whole of life, that you may lift your average condition higher.

I condemn those, therefore, in regard to these matters, who are living in such ways that at the best they shall reap this world and lose the other. And it is to such that the Master addresses the solemn words, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" I do not blame you because you love your friends; but I do blame you because you love them in such a way that you will waste your love upon them. I do not blame you for building your houses and making them beautiful; but I do blame you that you know enough to do that, and yet do not build that other house, and make it still more beautiful. I do not blame you for sagacity and foresight and wisdom in business; but that wisdom which teaches you economy in the lower life ought to teach you still more forcibly in regard to the higher life. I do not blame any man because he thinks it wise to insure his property against fire or destruction by accident; but I do blame a man if he knows enough to insure his houses and horses and dogs, and leaves his soul all uninsured, and to the chances and accidents of the unknown and invisible world. I bring up the wisdom with which you conduct your lower life, to sit in judgement upon the folly with which you squander your higher life. You are living for the flesh. You are living for the things which are this side of the horizon of death. You are living for time; and yet eternity is im-

pending. It would seem as though all the past were but the thought and the hint of the existence of that eternity; and yet, you are squandering before you reach it what you will need there. You are losing the other life because you are determined to have this life. You want this world, and you are paying the whole of the other world for it.

May God grant that wisdom to you by which you shall understand that he who lives rightly for heaven inherits the earth; while he who inherits the earth first forfeits heaven. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, thou hast made the way to thy feet plain and pleasant to us. We once sought thee as strangers, seeking a strange place in a strange far country; but now we are children of our home, and have been made so well acquainted with thee, that it is as drawing near to our Father's house. And as there were around about our home in childhood a thousand associations which cannot die out, and after which we go back, now renewing pleasure at every step, so, besides what we get of thee from day to day in asking, there are all the sweet memories of the past; all the times of sorrow in which we came trooping to thee, and went away walking erect as the sons of God; all the days in which we went to thee full of uncertainty and doubt, and went away seeing and most happy. We have been to thee with heavy burdens; and though sometimes the burdens were taken away, oftener thou hast given us strength to bear them. We have been to thee in times of remorse and shame; and so gracious wert thou that we forgot to be ashamed, and only admired and adored the greatness and goodness of thy soul. And now we have learned to think of thee as ineffable in love. Unspeakably kind art thou. Our thoughts praise thee better than our lips can. Silently we are more to thee than we can be in open petition. And thou lookest upon our souls, O blessed Father, and dost accept the incense of praise and gratitude, the thoughts of love, and the joys that sing to thee silently.

We rejoice that thou art such an One, and that there is such affluence of understanding between thee and us. Looking out of thy greatness as from a palace, thou dost behold us, though we are poor, and draw near to thee in all our insignificance. But we are to be like thee. This is thy work—to draw us up out of these beginnings, that seem so far away and so poor, to a glorious ending. As from seeds that are most insignificant, we behold the vines and blossoms that come in all their glory, when the sun hath wrought long enough at them; so thou dost, out of this miserable beginning of human life, work up finally the glory of immortality. And thou dost bring forth out of homeliness rare beauty; and out of hated things, things most sweet and beautiful. We bless thee, that thou art working in us, and rejoice that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do. For who could possibly find his way to manhood, who could withstand all the

temptations and wiles which beset us, without thy help? It is because we are guided and guarded and evermore inspired, that we have hope that we shall persevere unto the end, and finally be saved; and that we shall be exalted into glory and honor and immortality; and that beauty shall descend upon us to depart no more; and that all those things which cause us, here on earth, weakness, and pain, and shame, shall pass away and return no more forever.

And now, O Lord our God! we thank thee for all thy faithfulness. We beseech of thee that we may not provoke it by our continuous pride; by our hardness of heart; by our indocility. We do not know, as thou dost, how poor and needy we are; and yet we know and feel that we are needy every day. And to-day we come to be filled with generous affections. We desire, to-day, to have our faith made more comprehensive, and bolder. To-day we desire, by hope, to take possession of the things that are ours. Come hither, as we have, from every source and every quarter of life; come hither, as many of us have, in troubles, under burdens, and with crosses and yokes to bear; come hither, as many of us have, from poverty, and anxiety, and distress, and bereavements, and anguish of soul, our wants are plain to thee, thou Bounty-giver. And for every one thou hast a message of duty to-day. And as, in the garden, thou didst call Mary by name, and she knew thee, so silently call by name every one in thy presence to-day, that each one may know that it is *the* Saviour, and *their* Saviour, drawing near for mercy; knowing them altogether—a High priest that can be touched with the feeling of infirmities, and has been tempted in all points as we are, and yet without sin, and is able to succor those that come boldly now to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need. Oh! look upon all whose need is great at this time. Look upon all that need thee, and know it; and upon all those, more wretched, who need thee, and know it not.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may be awakened to things beyond our senses, and beyond the range of this earthly life. Grant that we may come into the full faith and rejoicing of our whole manhood, as we stand in Christ Jesus. And we pray that thou wilt fill the hearts of all that come hither to-day with thy mercies, as they severally need. Strengthen the weak. Inspire hope in the desponding. Give consolation to those that are afflicted. Teach wisdom to those that lack it, and ask thee. And grant, we pray thee, that there may be an inspiration that shall lead aright those that look to thee for direction in perplexing circumstances in life. Be all things to all, this morning. Make every one to feel how gracious and how condescending and how abounding is his God.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt look upon all those that are gathered this day to worship thee, strangers in a strange land; and grant that they may find here their mother, their father, and their brethren, in their Father's house. And look upon their heart-yearnings. Look upon all their ways and desires. And grant that they may be surprised by God's great goodness this day. Crown them abundantly with thy blessings.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt look upon all those, this day, that are coming to thee and asking for righteousness, and hungering and thirsting for higher disclosures of thy nature, and for higher ways of life. May they, O Lord! be filled—for thou has promised it.

Draw near to those that to-day would see thee, the Chief among ten thousand, altogether lovely. Reveal thyself unto them as thou dost not unto the world. Be near to all those, we beseech of thee, who are here to-day, looking wistfully upon the face of things, and yet knowing that they are not thine, and their life is not according to truth, nor according to the word of the Lord. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt inspire them with a nobler purpose, with a more generous determination. May they be able to contradict and throw away their old life. May they be able to take on a new life in Christ Jesus. May they be able to take a higher measure, and to live hereafter by a nobler ideal. And we beseech of thee that thy kingdom may come, and that thy will may be done, in hearts that are now rebellious.

Among the outcast and the needy, O Lord, our God, be thou found; and raise up many that shall go forth out of a living experience, to teach a new Gospel—the old Gospel made new by the experience of the heart that teaches it.

And we pray that love may prevail everywhere. We long for a time when the passions shall not be in ascendency; when faith and righteousness and true holiness shall rule in all the earth; when our laws shall be made in the spirit of justice, and executed impartially; and when all our officers shall be men of righteouness, seeking God's favor and the welfare of man. When shall the day come, that the earth shall be no more ravaged? How long is it needful to wait? O thou that dwellest in clouds and darkness! O thou that seemest to be slumbering through ages, but that never slumberest nor sleepest, when wilt thou come forth? When shall this guilty term end? When shall men awake and come forth from all their degradations? When shall wars cease, and superstitions, with all their cruelties, pass away? When shall knowledge shine brightly, bringing men to love and to God? Hasten that day, O Lord, we beseech thee, when nations shall learn war no more; when justice shall be the stability of the times; when righteousness shall prevail; when nations shall seek each other's good; when the spirit of the beast shall pass from out of the earth, and the spirit of men in Christ shall come to take its place. For thou hast promised that the whole earth shall see thy glory. Let it dawn. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly; for the whole earth doth wait for thee, and in thine absence is dark and sad and sorrowful.

And we beseech of thee that this day thou wilt strengthen the hands of all those that are setting forth the kingdom of our dear Saviour. Be with those that are in destitute places, far remote from civilization. Remember those that are in sickness and under discouragements, seeking in new states to lay the foundations for future generations. Comfort them. Give them holier thoughts than other men have for the vicissitudes of their life. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt raise up more and more to teach everywhere the poor and the ignorant. And grant that men may be inspired by thy example, and by the example of holy men in every age, to go forth, doing good to their fellows, seeking not their own, but others welfare.

And so let thy kingdom be advanced, let thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, and all the world filled with thy glory.

Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Command thy blessing, Our Father, to rest upon the word which we have spoken. Grant that we may arouse ourselves as becomes men, and look at truth as becomes the sons of God. May we never forget our birth, our lineage, our destiny. May we hear in ourselves the calls from the heavenly land. All those monitions, all those fugitive inspirations, all those yearnings, and hungerings, and unsatisfied appetites, which the soul knows, may we understand to be thy call. Send forth from the land beyond, O our Father! those messengers that shall hail us, and lead us, and guide us to thy heavenly estate. Let us not be content to build three tabernacles here, though it be even on the mount of transfiguration. May we be strangers and pilgrims on earth, seeking another and a better country, even an heavenly one. Bring us there that we may see each other. Grant that there we may see all that we have known and loved on earth. Grant that, beholding the light of thy countenance, and loving thee supremely, we may be strengthened to a grander love than we have known upon earth. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

LAW OF HEREDITARY INFLUENCE.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—EXOD. xxxiv. 7.

This is the abrupt close of perhaps the most remarkable passage in the whole Scripture. We are accustomed to think that the knowledge of God's character, like all other human knowledges, has been subject to an unfolding process; that it dawned little by little upon the world; that at first God was taught as the Source of power, the Author of all phenomena; that he was monarchic and governmental; and that in the amelioration of manners, and in the growth of civility and of affection, there was a preparation made to teach larger and more interior views of God; namely, what may be called the domesticity of the divine nature—his private and personal sympathies and affections.

And so, when we have arranged this theory of the gradual opening of the divine character upon the world according to the most approved modern notions of science, suddenly there blazes up on the far horizon of time the most perfect description of God that yet exists; and not only the most perfect, but the earliest. There it stands, the fullest and sweetest and most perfect description of divine mercy and love. Listen to this description, which was given thousands of years ago:

"The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

And then, abruptly, we fall on that passage which we have selected for our text—the doctrine of hereditary influence:

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

As it surprises us to find antedating our philosophy this moral character of God, so one may be surprised, also, to see, long before the era of science, this clear disclosure of that great principle which pervades human life, and which modern science is now beginning to formulate, and to teach as a principle—the transmission of hereditary influences, good and bad.

SUNDAY EVENING, May 1, 1870. LESSON: PSA. XXVII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 249, 906, 1263.

Some have thought that men existed before they lived in this world. It is a pleasing dream. It can claim to be nothing more than that. But admitting it to be so, they certainly were not consulted as respects their introduction into this life. It is not given to any of us to say when, nor where, nor of whom, we shall be born, nor what circumstances shall surround us. We are born into life finding nature already completed. Her works are infrangible, inevitable. We are placed within the circuit of a system the minutest part of which has been determined ; and we are not at liberty to overleap that circuit. Neither can we creep under it, nor in any way turn aside from it. We are born into a world where the whole economy of things was arranged before we came hither; and we are obliged to take things as we find them. And the circuit within which we have any power to form or change issues is very narrow. There is a circuit of liberty; but it is a very narrow circuit, within wide bounds of arbitrary and absolute enforcement.

Among the things which we find fixed inevitably in this life, is the circumstance, the necessity, of exerting influence and receiving influence. There is no evidence that this economy pervades the vegetable world. We see no proof that one plant acts directly upon others. It is true that a tree affects the things that grow near it; but the tree does not act directly on those things. It prevents a certain influence from being exerted upon them by interposing itself between the sun and them. But men cannot stand alone in juxtaposition without more than simply affecting each other in this way. Men are made curiously, marvelously, both to exert and to receive influence; and it is difficult to to determine which tendency is the strongest. They are equipollent, probably. In some, perhaps, they may not be exactly balanced; but the average is about the same.

The mind of man is unlike the attributes of the lower and nascent races. The nature of the human mind is such that a man must take on influence from all that are around about him, and must give out influence upon all that are around about him. We have no choice in the matter. Except by self-immuring, or absolute seclusion, we cannot break the force of this law. We do not alone influence men when we purpose to do it. When we bring the enginery of thought and emotion to bear, and determine voluntarily to produce effects upon men, then, to be sure, we influence them; but more often we influence them when we do not think of it even. We cannot help ourselves.

It is impossible for a stove in an apartment, being filled with fuel, and the fuel being set on fire, to retain its heat. It has to throw it out. And it is impossible for a man, living under the stimulus of power and emotion, to retain his influence. He must throw it out upon men that are round about him.

We are born into a life where we cannot determine the nature of the influences which we exert. We can repress some, modify others, and develop still others; but we cannot determine the effect, nor change it. A certain influence we must exert one upon another.

First, we will mention *voluntary* influence, or the capacity which we have gained of influencing our fellow men by bringing power, or the causes of power, to bear upon them on purpose. This is the more familiar form of influence; and it needs, therefore, the less exposition. It is the foundation of all instruction. The parent influences the child on purpose. The teacher purposely influences all the minds that are brought under his care. Friends influence friends. We draw men to our way of thinking, and to our way of acting. We persuade; we dissuade; we urge; we enforce our urgency; and in a thousand ways we voluntarily draw men to and fro. This is the secret of poetry; it is the secret of oratory; it is the secret of power in life, man with man.

How wide the scope, how vast the sum of it is, in any man's individual life, no one can tell. All the things that you do to-day or to-morrow, all the things from which your motives spring—the basilar influences, the intermediate influences, the coronal or moral influences, the various elements that you develop directly in men—these things, going on in an endless series, through forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty years—who can estimate them? Who can form a conception of all the power that one thus exerts through so long a period of time? Who can measure it? Who can gather up in any computation the volume of light and heat that has been cast out from the solar orb through centuries? Who can tell what the stars have emitted of their own or reflected light? Who can form any idea of the amount of light and heat which the sun has given forth?

Now, take that more fugitive and less computable element, the direct influence which the positive exertion of thought, and emotion, and sentiment and passion, has produced upon our fellow men.

Then, besides all this, besides what we do on purpose, besides what we set out to do, there is the other element of unconscious influence which men exert—that which our nature throws out without our volition. For I hold that it is with us as it is with the sun. I do not suppose that the sun ever thinks of raising the thermometer; but it does raise it. Wherever the sun shines warmly, the mercury goes up, although the sun and the instrument are both unconscious. And we are incessantly emitting influences, good, bad or negative. We are perpetually, by the force of life, throwing out from ourselves imperceptible influences. And yet, the sum of these influences is of the utmost weight and importance in life.

A single word spoken, you know not what it falls upon. You know not on what soul it rests. In some moods, words fall off from us, and are of no account. But there are other moods in which a word of hope, a word of cheer, a word of sympathy, is as balm. It changes the sequence of thought, and the whole order and direction of the mind. A single word is often like a switch on a railroad, which, although it is a point almost too fine to be seen, yet is sufficient, when turned, to change the course of the train from one track to another, and perhaps from one road to another. Single words have often switched men off from bad courses, or off from good ones, as the case may be. Many and many a man, by a simple action which was born of virtue, and which passed by him unconsciously, has determined the fate of those who were looking up to him. A good man stands in the community as a tree stands on a lawn in summer, full of blossoms, of which it is unconscious, but which every one who goes past the lawn sees, and blesses the tree for. The sweet odor of the apple-tree is wafted in every direction, and myriads are participators of its life and effloresence, or of its after-fruit. And so a great nature stands forth in bud, and in blossom, and in after maturation, and there go out from him in every direction influences for instruction, confirmation, inspiration. A thousand things which the man never thought to do, he does. More are the things which you do, not meaning to do them, than are the things which you do, intending to do them.

It is the simple weight of being, it is the inevitable radiation of thought and emotion, which produces a disturbance in other men's minds, and in the processes of their thought. A single example, silent, unspeaking by vocalization, but characterized by purity, by simplicity, crystalline and heavenly, has sweetened whole neighborhoods. And as the wax-taper burns in the temple by night, unconscious both of its own substance and of the light which it emits, so there be many persons who, in their humility, count themselves to be doing nothing in life, but who are diffusing the divinest influences in every direction. Fidelity, disinterestedness in love, pure peacefulness, love of God, and faith in invisible things, cannot exist in a man without having their effect upon his fellow men. It is impossible that one should stand up in the midst of a community and simply be good, and not diffuse the influence of that goodness on every side.

And the reach is incalculable. I have heard persons say that they seemed to themselves to be doing nothing in life. No man and no woman that is faithfully following the Lord Jesus Christ can be said to be doing nothing. It is not the eloquent tongue that speaks the most. It is not the heroic action which men sound forth that is, after all, the most potential in the affairs of men. The symmetrical example of holy

souls has a voice which sounds out further, and reaches forth a hand that is felt further, than more positive and more declarative influences.

That which is true of goodness is true, also, of evil. Men who are under the influence of the malign passions are sowing the seeds of these passions. Sparks fly out from them as from the chimney of a forge. Men there are who go driving through life under the stimulus of intense wicked feelings, as trains drive through the night, sending out a stream of sparks behind them which, lighting upon any inflammable thing along the road, leave a conflagration in the rear. The train thunders on; but the fire stays behind, to burn whatever is within its reach. Thousands and thousands of men there are who never intended to destroy anybody, but who have murdered scores and hundreds of men. Thousands and thousands there are who never meant to make anybody unhappy, but who have waked the fires of hell in many and many a heart. There are thousands and thousands of men who, if you should question them, would lift up their hand before God, and say, "I have never smitten my brother; I have never destroyed a soul;" and yet, in the last great day it will appear that these men, by their unconscious influence, have set on fire trains of thought and imagination in men which in the end utterly destroyed them.

Who, having the small-pox, or the plague, and making a journey withal, having gone, with the pest upon him, through car after car, through village after village, and along the whole line of the road, can, at the end of the route, sit down and count up what he has done? How does he know what germs of that dreadful disease he has sown wherever he has been? How does he know how those germs will fester here and there? And how does he know what widening circles of contagion, having their origin with him, will sweep through the country, carrying death and destruction every whither?

And where a man's heart is set on fire of hell, and he has spread his baleful influence unconsciously among the mercurial, the imaginative, the over-sensitive, and the receptive natures that are around about him, who can measure how much mischief he has done?

Born with divine intelligence, born with moral sentiments that ally them to God, born with instincts that should have led them upward, how many men have gone through life, distributing only those influences that animalize life, lower the tone of conscience, take away sensibility, destroy faith in goodness, and, finding men around about them all ready, like the open furrow, for seeds of immortality, sow therein the seeds of utter destruction! How many men there are that, without attempting it purposely, have slain many souls with dishonesty! How many there are that never conjured with men's truth, and yet left them liars! How many there are that never set out to make

infidels of men, and yet by their prosperity in awful courses have broken the faith of thousands and thousands in the existence of a principle of justice in this world, or in the belief that there is a divine moral government which discriminates between right and wrong!

It is not needful that a man should set out to do wrong. If you are bad, you cannot help doing wrong. And if you are good, you cannot help spreading goodness. A man will distribute that which is the inherent quality of his character. He that is clothed with virtue, or filled with the inspirations of a true piety—let him stand where he may, and he shines, and scatters around him the light of God. And he that is filled with wickedness—let him go where he may, and behind him, however many precautions he may take, that wickedness will spread. It is the inherent necessity of wickedness to breed wickedness and distribute it.

A man is responsible, not only for what he does on purpose, but for what he unconsciously does. And the load of responsibility grows as you take in these widening circles. More than this, the greater the nature, and the more ample the endowment, the more influence does a man exert both for good and for evil—reversing, precisely, the vagrant and corrupt impression of men, that a great nature is to have great liberty.

The moral tone of our literature in this respect is exceedingly bad. There is almost a maxim that genius has a right to be lawless as to its method of doing right things. But genius has no right to be lawless as to whether the things that it does shall be right or wrong. It may change language if it please; it may fashion art as it chooses; but as between virtue and vice, as between self-indulgence and temperance, as between purity and sensuality, piety and bestiality, genius has no rights. Every man is responsible for duty; and duty, and responsibility for it, augment in the proportion of being. If a man has but one talent, but one talent is required of him; but if he has ten talents, then ten talents are required of him. And so, if a man have wit and genius and knowledge, instead of having a right to be lewd and intemperate and full of all license of tongue, he, above all others, is bound to be strict, and sweet, and true, and pure. The greatest offenders that have ever lived on the face of the earth, have not been cruel robbers, vulgar thieves, or men wallowing in bestiality. The children of light, the fallen stars of genius—these are the men on whom God will lay the line, and whom he will measure with terrible severity.

It is not a small thing for a man to be organized and sent into this world a power-breeder. When a man has great fertility of thought and great play of imagination, it is not for him, like Swinburne, to set on fire all the low and base passions of human nature, and leave on

record a literature that Venus would blush to read. It is not a small thing for a man endowed with the gift of song to clothe the appetites in glowing stanzas that make drunkenness almost celestial and divine. It is abominable that persons on whom God has showered the richest blessings of nature, should wreathe the beast that is in men with flowers and with laurels, and so win those who are already over-addicted to things low and sensuous by still more potent fascinations and charms and immoralities. Until within a comparatively recent period the sons of genius have wrought for Satan, and not for God.

But one step further. Our influence is not merely voluntary, or involuntary and unconscious, but it becomes complex, because it is compounded with the lives and the added influence of others. We are social. We come into relations with men. Our freedom touches theirs. We inspire them. But we do not change their nature. We, as it were, sow germs in their soil. These germs go on and become forces in their hands. So that that which we do to single ones, they propagate. We lose sight of the fulness and the scope of the things that we do, and they go on in widening circles through society. Long have we forgotten, if we ever knew them, things that we set in motion, the influence of which was good or bad, but the outwork of which we shall yet know.

When, under a divine inspiration second only to that of the sweet singer of Israel, Isaac Watts wrote his hymns, do you suppose he formed the remotest estimate of how those hymns, setting like an organist at the keys of the human soul, would go on playing the divinist melodies out of holy hearts through thousands and thousands of years? When the rapt and celestial Charles Wesley wrote those hymns of inspiration of his, and when the melancholy Cowper wrote his sweet hymns, do you suppose they dreamed how those soldiers of light, armed in full panoply, would go marching on, slaying doubt and unbelief, and making battle for Christ to the end of time? And when those masters of iniquity, the poets that have sung for Belial's lewd pleasure, wrote the vile things that, in euphony, and with all the grace and movement of music, go on chanting their bad errands and inspirations, do you suppose they dreamed of the causes they were setting in operation?

Books preserve the good and the bad. The thoughts which men embalm in literature live on long and long after their bones have crumbled back to dust again. And who can measure the power and the might of the good that a man can do? Or, who can measure the power and the might of the bad that a man can do? I would rather slay with my red hand, in rage, a thousand men, and murder them, expiating my crime (or rather, receiving an honorable acquittal at the

hands of the courts, and be praised by the whole community for being a murderer!) than to pollute any of the great sentiments of humanity with a work of genius so beauteous that it could not die, but would go on corrupting and corrupting generations of men, and so be the murderer of men's consciences and spiritual natures.

And yet, how little is this accounted of! How are men still putting laurels on satanic principles! How still are men looked up to, and their influence descanted on, whose whole power is to wake up the devil that is in men! How are these men that walk in places of honor and places of trust still unscorned and unslain! How do men whose whole work in society is to sour life, to wake up malignant passions, to stab men with jealousies, to perpetuate feuds, to create new quarrels, and to drag out whatever there is verminous and mischievous and belluine in human nature, still retain enough respectability to give currency to the evil that they do—doing it deftly, and seeking, by skill, and literature, and science, and genius itself, to make the devil deified!

Can any man be more a culprit, can any man be more surely under the impending wrath of God, that shall by-and-by fall heavily and rest forever, than such an one? Oh! how miserable will be the best estate of such men, though their names be bruited about, and though they walk in places of power!

But men's influence is not limited to their voluntary action, nor to the complex social relations which they sustain, and by which their influence is propagated indirectly. In some respects men hold in their hands the history of the future. The very solemn declaration of our text—"Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation"—this is the mystery of ages. If it were but on the one side; if men, having the power of benificence, had the power to perpetuate it, we should admire that; but if it is a fact that men have the power of transmitting corruption, and so of influencing after times, who can fail to marvel at that? If that is a law, men may well stand appalled in the presence of such results as must fall out under it. And it is a law; it is a fact.

Men are empowered to transmit bodily ailments on the one hand; and, on the other hand, they are empowered to transmit bodily strength, symmetry and power. I do not believe in the conversion of the world simply by the preaching of the Gospel—that is to say, by the mere influence of moral truth. We must learn this great hereditary law; and we must include in our purposes of benevolonce the wise selection, the perpetuity and the improvement of the race, by the observance of this great law of hereditary transmission. As long as men either know nothing or care nothing about this law; as long as they go on trans-

mitting, constantly, and haphazard, the traits, good or bad, that they have in them—so long it will require all the power of the preached Gospel to make up for the irregularities that fall out under the ignorance or neglect of natural law. We are perpetually bringing moral law to bear to correct evils that result from violations of natural law. And it is a solemn thing, that a man crippled by a life-long disease, of liver, or stomach, or brain, is left free to transmit to his children—four, six, eight of them—the same hereditary tendencies; and that they in their turn, spreading and multiplying, are left free to transmit those tendencies to their children; and that they again are left free to transmit them to the third and fourth generation, until some new strain of blood comes in to correct the old and corrupt tendencies. What a branching misery is within the reach of every man! And how does the physician, how does the physiologist, studying life as it is, see that this great law is perpetually developing itself, and shedding its fruits; and that men have the power, not simply of exerting influence by their mentality, but of transmiting causes, good or evil, by this hereditary law.

Men transmit not simply their constitutional peculiarities, but their acquired qualities. It is so in the animal kingdom, and still more forcefully so in the human race. Animals that have been instructed and made intelligent by drill, will have a posterity that will take on instruction much more facilely than they did. This tendency will not increase beyond certain limits, and these limits are comparatively narrow; but it is a tendency that is observed. We certainly see it in society.

Savage natures cannot take on civilization, until, by a process of repetition, the hereditary law has had time to work out. One generation moderately civilized, leaves another one that takes on civilization faster; and that one leaves another that takes on civilization still faster; and so on, until a generation is reached that is thorough-bred, and facile to take on education.

The children of educated parents are, generally speaking, easily educated. The children of dull and uneducated parents are not facile of education. They are slow to learn, and slow to retain or use what they learn.

Not only is this so in respect to intelligence, but it is so with regard to goodness. There seem to be exceptional laws; but I think they are scarcely to be explained. Men think that the children of the good are seldom as good as their parents, and that the children of the great are seldom as great. That depends upon *their* parents again. Any faculty in the parent that is used, tends to reproduce itself in the posterity, if it be a passion; or tends to exhaust itself, if it be a sentiment, and does not reappear in the posterity.

So that excessively nervous conscientious persons are very likely to have children that are without conscience. They use up all the conscience they have in themselves, they burn it out, so that there is none to transmit. It is the lower animal nature that seems to have a superfluity of power by which passions, set on fire, can transmit themselves. But the higher nature, exiguous, as it were, lacking stimulus and power, easily becomes exhausted, and is not easily transmissible.

And so it is with religious or spiritual-minded persons. If they become excessively spiritual-minded, or if they are over-educated religiously, then the moral side of their nature is exhausted, and they have no capacity to transmit the higher qualities, and their children come out with a dent where they had a prominence.

But the great law stands, nevertheless, that persons living with a wise regard to the law that touches every part of their nature—living virtuously and Christianly—tend to transmit virtuous inclinations, and tend to transmit a susceptibility that with more ease becomes truly Christian in their posterity. The children of intelligent and Christian parents are more likely to become Christians than the children of ignorant and wicked parents.

Men transmit, likewise, their acquired tendencies of thought. Lying men tend to have lying children. Dishonest men tend to have dishonest children. Thieves tend to breed thieves; murderers, murderers; drunkards, drunkards; insane men, insanity. These great facts are indisputable. They may not often be heard in the sanctuary; though it would be wiser if they were heard there oftener.

Not to follow the line of illustration further, I remark, first, that the power of a good life, both directly and indirectly or remotely, is, luckily, incalculable. One of the most potential motives of true holiness is the unconscious benefit which it distributes on every side—the far-reaching transmission of an eminent moral nature—the blessing that comes down, according to the word of God, from *the fathers upon the children, to the third and the fourth generation.*

There have been notable names in our own American history of men of holiness, and men of prayer, who died generations back, and whose posterity are carrying down with them to this day precisely the same traits that they possessed. From men and households that landed in the earliest days in the colonies, there has come down an unbroken succession of just such dispositions and tendencies. And every man that is laying the foundations of true manhood in himself; every man that is building himself up spiritually and Christianly—every such man, besides what he reaps himself, besides the bounty and benefit which his own household receives, besides the remote and direct influences which he will distribute all the way down through life, has the

promise and moral certainty of transmitting those same qualities which are in him, to unborn generations, so that when he is dead his influence will still walk and speak and transmit itself with growing power and in multiplying circles, to remote periods—*to the third and the fourth generation.*

Therefore, the sweetness and the blessedness which there is in the Christian life is not measurable by any of the ordinary standards. It is susceptible of an illustration far transcending any that has ever been given of it.

The malignity of sin is a terrible malignity, as it is revealed by this great law of the transmission of influence to posterity, either directly and voluntarily, or indirectly and unconsciously. There are multitudes of men that are careless of themselves. They are said to be their own worst enemies. They are men that are free and easy; that squander their money; that pervert their disposition; that corrupt the sources of taste and sensibility; that degrade their persons; that utterly ignore holiness of body; and that live all the way through life kind, it may be, but kind because they happen to be good-natured. And because they are good-natured and genial, people say of them, "They are clever fellows; they are kind men; they do no harm; at any rate they are their own worst enemies."

Now, a man that is spending his whole life to destroy himself, cannot stop with himself. No man ever destroyed himself alone, no man ever perverted the sources of his life in this way without at the same time influencing more than he knew or dreamed of. And the better fellow he is, the more likely is he to exert an influence.

More than that, it is not himself alone that is destroyed. The babe in the cradle is cursed. The daughter unborn is cursed. The heir and sequent children are cursed. And he scorns reproof, and will not be persuaded for his own sake, nor believe that he is in danger. And as one stands in a window when the street is crowded, and sows fire, casting it down not knowing whom it may smite, or between whose raiment and skin it may come, blistering and burning; so men stand transmitting influences that go down from generation to generation corrupting and corrupting human life. It is a terrible thing for a man to be a vicious man, and the father of vicious men; to be a drunkard, and the father of drunkards; to be a culprit, and the father of culprits.

It is difficult to speak with sufficient delicacy of some shades of sin—the sin of lewdness, for instance; and unless one be courageous, he can scarcely perform this duty. Yet, no other duty is more necessary. The raging and destroying sin of such great cities as this; the sin that lurks and corrupts unseen, and whose wide devastation is so much shielded by a false delicacy, or by circumstances which make

men shrink as conscious that they lack skill delicately and knowledge wisely to touch the most immedicable of evils—this ought certainly not to be omitted from a category of transmissible sins. And men that sin against their own bodies and against their own purity, set in motion a line of causes which go on working down through generations. For their own guilty, selfish transgression, their own delusive and short-lived delirium of pleasure, they curse, with a bane and a blast immeasurable, generations yet to come.

It is the statement of many statisticians, that the tendencies to disease which are hereditarily transmissible, lower the tone of life in whole kingdoms in Europe. Whole armies become centres of transmitted influences that break out in various forms of disease, weakness and corruption. The constitution is lowered in tone; and life, in whole generations, in certain nations and societies, is corrupted. And all this mischief springs from that one source.

Let those who yet are safe, but who feel the whirl and temptation on the perilous edge, turn to the word of God, and read those terrific passages which occur in the Proverbs of Solomon. Let them, as they draw near to the house of death, shudder. In the chill, and in the dark shadow, let them gain wisdom and turn back, and learn that in the way of temperance, and in the way of chastity, and in the way of absolute virtue of thought and imagination, there is not only plenary happiness to them, but increasing influences for good, and sweet and divine blessings, rolling over and over to their posterity.

I will add but a single consideration more; and that is a caution and a warning to all those who are consciously bearing in themselves the seeds of transmissable disease. I think there is no crime and no misdeameanor, to those that are instructed, greater than that of forming marriage connections under such circumstances. There are men who are born to celibacy. There are men and women that ought to have sense of duty and heroism enough to say, "It is not wise for me to put in peril posterity. I am marked of God. I bear in myself transmissable qualities of mischief and evil. I will not shed them abroad. I will stand alone; and with me shall end one series of sorrows." But there are many who, for want of instruction, go on transmitting disease to future generations. And we see persons coming together both of whom are marked for early death, scrofulous and consumptive; and out blossoms the bright bud of promise and of hope; and ere long the minister is summoned to sympathize with them for one babe gone. A second comes and goes. The house is full of mourning. The third, alas! does not go, but lives on, with shattered constitution, with battered powers, and comes down into life carrying pain, pain, pain, and suffering in increasing waves, we know not how long nor how far.

It ought not to be a difficult thing for any Christianly bred man or woman to say, "It is not for me to be a sower of mischief in the future." There is many and many a man that should say, "By the help of God I will live and die single."

This is a thing which ministers ought to preach about. This is a thing which doctors ought to give their attention to. A doctor ought not to follow disease, but go ahead of it, as far as may be, and prevent it. He ought to teach the community the laws of health. And on no point is there more need of knowledge than on this.

It may be asked, "If we believe this to be the terrible constitution of things under which we are brought into this life, how can we help living in a state of perpetual anxiety? Must not a man watch the glance of his eye, the turn of his hand, his every step, even? Who can but ponder and brood upon the mischiefs which he may be unconsciously propagating? If besides what we mean to do, there is that other wide and fruitful influence which is unconscious, what peace and rest can there be to a man?"

If you have built your character on truth, justice, purity and piety, you need not be afraid. Just give yourself liberty. Do not ponder nor turn back. Do not fritter away your life by these unprofitable introversions and analytical processes of mind by which you attempt to detect the nature of your thoughts and feelings. Be sure of one thing—that a round, robust, moral manhood is safe. Trust it. Give it power. Let it run. No man that is doing wickedly ought to be other than anxious; but any man that is conscious that he has a judgment that is directed toward virtue, and piety, and God, and the welfare of his fellow men, need not be watching himself. The only man that is free, the only man that may do what he wants to, is the man who wants to do only what is good. The only man that is free from anxieties and forebodings, is the man who has the testimony of God in his soul that he is virtuous. He stands strong. He is full of joy now, and is full of anticipations of joy in days to come, and of certainties of joy when the sun and moon shall have passed away.

Blessed are they that have trusted in the Lord. They shall stand firmer than the mountains. Far above the disturbing influences that annoy the feeble, the weak, the guilty, and the fear-driven, they bathe their head in the upper sky. On them rests earliest, and latest, and longest, the benignest rays of the sun. Afar off they are seen in all colors and all forms of beauty. They shall be as Mount Zion, which God loveth.

Let these words sink deep into your hearts—especially into the hearts of those that are beginning life. Make right choices. Choose for God. Choose for virtue. Choose for kindness, for purity, and for

truth. Live for the highest things. Put your ambition not lower than the sun, but far above it. *Set your affections on things above, at the right hand of God, where Christ sitteth.* So live, and you shall rise to immortality. And then you shall behold how, through countless ages, the benefit and the blessing of your life still streams on, and how, being dead, you yet speak.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, this evening, our Father, rejoicing in thy mercy. Thou hast made our hearts glad all the day long. We have dwelt in thy presence all the day long. Thy smile has rested upon us. Not on the earth art thou now shining more graciously, bringing forth bud and flower, than upon our hearts. We rejoice that we are the children of God, and are beloved. We rejoice, though our sins are many and aggravated, that thou hast forgiven them, and wilt forgive. Thou art full of mercy. Thou art perpetual in thy tenderness. None can throw themselves away from thee except their hearts are set to do iniquity. We rejoice, O Lord our God, for all the hope which we have that when this short life is passed we shall reach a better land where temptations cease; where all influences descending from thee, unbroken we shall stand as the children of the Lord, in full power of holiness, and in all graciousness and beauty. We aspire to that land. From amidst tears, and cares, and sorrows, and sighing, we look to that land of rest where no storm blows, where no bolts descend, where are no winter blasts, and where no summer languisheth, but where there is rest for the weary, and perfectness to those that have been striving, where all are at home, and thou art the Father, and we are gathered as thy children, rejoicing in thee supremely, and in the reflected love of thy soul taught to love one another.

Help us, O Lord our God, while we make toward that blessed port across the stormy sea. Though delayed, baffled, driven out of our course, amidst perils be thou still our pilot. Guide us more safely, and bring us safely, every one of us, into that blessed harbor of God. Help us to be jealous of every evil in ourselves; to fear and to dread sin; to cast it out, and to purify ourselves wholly from it. And grant that we may know what is sinful. Thou Holy Spirit by which the heart shall be searched, search thou us. O God! try us, and see if there be any evil way in us. May we not be content with our own thought from day-to-day. May we open our souls to the secret nature of our God.

And we pray that thou wilt make us more and more sensitive to things that are wrong. Give more and more sensibility to our conscience—the discerning power in spiritual things. Grant that we may so live that by our experiences, by our life, by our aspiration, by our labor and sacrifice, one for another, we may interpret more of the divine nature. And so, learning more of thee, may we come back to human life with better knowledge of it, and thus gain both ways. And so we beseech of thee that we may go from glory to glory.

Bless, we beseech of thee, all the members of this congregation now assembled in thy divine presence. We pray that thou wilt cheer those that are in despondency, and give light to those that are in darkness and perplexity, and confirmation to all those that waver. Grant that those that are heavy-hearted may be comforted by the divine Consoler. Bless those that are bereaved, and sanctify their sorrows. Strengthen all that are burdened with care and trouble. And we pray that thou wilt grant that this whole people may to-night experience in thy presence such a blessing as shall make them feel their nearness to thee. And give them faith of thy government and of thy power upon men on earth.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, our God! that thou wilt remember any that are absent from us—all those whose hearts turn hitherward. And may thy truth and thy Spirit which makes us rich be their portion forever.

And now we commit ourselves to thy fatherly guidance. We need but thee. All the blessings of life are doubled and grow more fruitful in thy smile. Make our affections sweeter by loving us. Teach us divine love. Make our mercies and our sorrows more beneficent. And guide us safely through unto the last. And then, in dying to this world, may we begin

to live to the other, and beholding thee, and the glory of the moral state, may we rise to blessedness, and through infinite gradations, forever and forever, ascend in happiness.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt add thy blessing to the words spoken. May we understand the mystery of living. May we understand the mystery of thy providence in life. May we take from thy word the solution of many of those obscure and troublous questions which fall upon our thoughts. May we know that thou hast built us up like thyself. We are surrounded by vital influences on every side. Nor can we repress them. May we only seek so to purify our hearts, so to fill ourselves with gracious intents, so to come into sympathy with thy divine and spiritual nature, that all things which proceed from us shall be as of God.

Bless us, we pray thee, now, at the close of this Sabbath day. We thank thee for the day—for its morning, its noon, and its evening. Give us strength out of the bosom of this Sabbath to go down into the great week before us, to stand, to labor, and to suffer. Grant, we pray thee, that we may be men enduring hardship as good soldiers. And bring us finally, above all further suffering, beyond care and trouble, into thy heavenly kingdom, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

THE TRUE RELIGION.

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."— MATT. XXII. 36–40.

Our Master was in Jerusalem, and was sitting in the temple, as was his custom, receiving questions and giving answers; and almost all the points of interest that at that time were agitating the minds of men, were brought up in turn before him. By-and-by a scribe—or, as he is called in this passage, *a lawyer*, which was the same thing—asked him a question. The Jewish law was the Old Testament—the five books of Moses and the prophets, particularly. The lawyers, therefore, were the commentators as well as the interpreters of the Old Testament. They were accustomed to look a little further along than the simple ingenuities which other men indulged in. The question which was asked by this scribe, or lawyer, might be called a constitutional question. He said,

"Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

He went to the marrow of the matter. He asked for the starting-point, the foundation idea, of the law of religion. And this is the answer:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

As a clear, explicit, and unrevoked statement by our Lord, of what constitutes true piety, this takes precedence of all others. It never was modified. It was repeated in various forms. The apostles understood it as we understand it. "Love," says the chief apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law." John's epistles are nothing but the application of this same thought to the interior consciousness of men in distinction from their exterior conduct. That immortal chant, the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, is but an unfolding of the same idea—the dominancy of love to God and man.

SUNDAY MORNING, May 15, 1870. LESSON: ROM. XII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 269, 513, 1262.

And when Paul, in his old age, was about to lay down his ministry, and wrote to Timothy, whom he called his son, he gave him precisely the same views of the question.

"Now, the end of the commandment [the scope and purpose of it] is, charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

And all the specific directions—what may be called the ethical instruction of the New Testament—comport with this ruling conception of true piety. There is not a single instance in which duty is so instructed that it would traverse this conception of beneficence.

1. We have, then, an explicit revelation of the true nature of religion, about which the whole world has been in so much dispute. The essence of religion is *love to God and love to man.* It is toward God a whole and continuous sympathy and love. It is toward man a uniform and dominating disposition of benevolence. It is love, not as a passion, but as a sentiment. Toward God, the admiring, confiding, trusting, reverential love that children have for their parents, is the love that is commanded. There is in it just that touch of fear which produces reverence; which makes modesty in the child; which keeps him from forwardness and impertinent familiarity—no other fear. And we have no need to stumble. Every true household is God's interpreter—not in respect to the perfectness of the disclosure of life, but in respect to the kind of exercise required of God toward him. It is just the kind which the loving child exercises toward a beneficent parent. Toward men, it is benevolence; a feeling of kindness; a heart that loves happiness; that finds itself more happy in making others happy than in anything else; that sees no better use to make of the whole force of life than as an instrument for making men happier. And as goodness and happiness are correlatives, men are made happier by being made better.

You will observe the intenseness of the repetitions according to the Hebrew method.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

That is strong enough. This love is to comprehend every part of the mind, and all the time. The expression *love* is equivalent to our idea of dominance. It does not mean that we are to be thinking about God all the time. Nobody thinks of any one thing all the time, nor can. To do that would be insanity. Not the mother, nor the lover, newest and least expert, does it. It is contrary to our organization. For the mind is not a monochord. It is a complex instrument, and must alternate its states and experiences.

Nor does this expression teach that there is to be no other activity,

no other product of the mind—for instance, no worship, no veneration, no reason, no conscience, no indignation, no strife, but simply this: that the whole soul in free play, whatever part of itself it exerts, must be active in the spirit of benevolence—of love toward God, and of a true well-wishing toward men.

This we may easily understand by familiar parallels. We say of persons who are cultivated, that their whole manhood is cultivated. We do not mean that there is a thing called *cultivation* which they have in exercise, and nothing besides. We simply mean that there is a given mode of activity; that the reason and the affections act in a certain fine way; that they act with a particular quality which we call *cultivation*. When we speak of a man as well-bred and refined, we do not mean that his taste is the only active part of his nature, but this: that whatever other faculties are acting, they all take on the quality of taste, so that they are of the nature of this predominent influence.

Just the same is true of conscience. A man is said to be a conscientious man when conscience rules him. When we speak of a man as conscientious, we do not mean that conscience is the only feeling that rises up and acts, but that it so distributes itself through the mind that every other feeling which comes in acts conscientiously. And when we are commanded to *love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves*, it is not meant that a man should sit down and love, love, love, love, with a repetition that is just like the ticking of a clock, which repeats the same tick over, and over, and over, and over again. It is not meant that we are to compress all the parts of our life into any such unity, or any such singleness, that they shall all be included in one thing, that one thing being love to God and love to man. It is meant that a strong predominant love to God and man shall so pervade the soul, that there cannot be in all the action of the mind one feeling that will go contrary to that spirit. The reason must be a reason acting in the spirit of love; the conscience must be a conscience acting in the atmosphere of love; the taste must be a taste acting in the atmosphere and spirit of love—love to God and love to man. The appetites and passions, and every other faculty of the mind, in all their power or variety or versatility, may act; but they will act as steeds that feel the one rein, which goes back to the hands of the one driver, whose name is Love.

So that there is to be a spirit of unity—a regent, dominant spirit which gives color, influence and character to every other activity of the whole soul; and this is to be true love toward God, and true love toward man—not love as a passion of elective affinity, but love as an expression of happiness—wishing, well-wishing, benevolence.

Now, our Master declares that the typical Christian man is he whose whole activity, reason, will, affections, sentiments, are pervaded with this spirit of charity; this love of others; this instinct of kindness; this benevolence; this well-wishing. This it is to be Christ-like. This it is to be Christian. This it is to be pious, or religious.

2. We have here, then, the physological idea of the Bible in regard to the perfect man. In which direction does perfection tend? What is the ideal of perfectness in man? There have been a great many ideals on this subject. The Greek ideal was beauty, unfolding around about the intellect. In other words, intellectual activity, combined with taste, constituted the Greek conception of true manhood. There was with this, of course, a lower inflection of enjoyment. But the ideal of man to the Greeks was a thinker, and an elegant thinker. He that had intellectual power largest, most various, finest, and most fruitful, embodied, to their conception, the perfect man. The Greeks considered themselves as cultivated; and all the rest of the world were barbarians to their thought. The Greek divided the world into two classes—the Greeks and the barbarians. Whoever was not Greek was barbarian, according to his classification. This is just the same thing that has been going on ever since. The Englishman and the non-Englishman constitute the two great classes in London. In this country it is the American and the non-American. And it is so all the world over. Self first; and then all the rest—the unfortunate, the secondary. The Greek felt that he was the lord of creation, easily—not by purity; not by spiritual insight; not by largeness and perfectness of development, all around; but simply by the force of a philosophical exercise of the reason, and by the force of idealized taste. And that strain comes down to our day. We have Greeks, and have had from the time of Pericles to the present hour. There has been a line of philosophers coming down through Germany, and France, and England; and now in our day there are philosophers such as Buckle, who do not admit that the world has grown from moral causes at all, but affirm that it has made all its progress by the unfolding force of the understanding or the intellect.

The Roman conception of man was, not that he was a philosopher, but that he was a warrior, a ruler. Power, therefore, was inherent—not fineness of thought, not intellectual elegance and comprehensiveness, but the power to govern, the power to combine, the power to overthrow and crush resistance, the power to organize law and maintain obedient order.

In modern times, outside of the Christian circle, there seems to be another ideal. He is the great man who has the qualities of a statesman; who has the capacity to organize financial and political forces;

who can manage; who sits high in the seat of power; who has genius to understand and control men.

But Christ's ideal is neither philosophy, nor war, nor statecraft, but love—love to God, and love to man. When that spirit predominates in the soul, you have struck the key-note; you have got hold of the radical principle; you have touched the line of direction. And all unfolding, all growth, that is true and perfect, in time, is to take that direction. And when the perfect man shall appear on the earth—the *coming man* that we hear so much about, and that is so slow a traveler—it will be found that he is a man who has perfectly entered into this divine conception of love, reaching upward toward all things high and pure and noble, and reaching outward toward all sentient beings. And the capacity to create happiness will be the true ideal of man.

We do not mean that there will be nothing else but this simple sentiment or sentimentality of well-wishing, but that this is to be the critical test. All activities must be found to be under the influence of this one particular feeling. All things liked or disliked must be liked or disliked according to this central spirit. This must be the one atmosphere that pervades, overhangs, surrounds, interpenetrates the whole activity of the thought, of the imagination, of the sentiments, of the affections; so that they are all of them moving consentaneously, with a new inspiration and for the earnest of a true benevolence. Then we shall have the God-man—the perfect man in Christ Jesus.

3. If this be so, we have now the only true test of personal religion. And to all stages of progress, from the remotest step toward religion up to its highest ecstacies, we have an interpreting key.

There are many who do not believe that there is any such experience as that which is called *conviction of sin*. They do not believe that men, after all, are sinners—certainly not such dreadful sinners as to be subjected to proxysms of terror and of darkness. They think that this idea of conviction of sin is fictitious, and that men's imaginations are played upon by it. They think that men are deluded in regard to it. They think that conviction of sin is, compared to the truth, very much what phantasmagoria, or pictures produced by the magic lantern, are in the child's imagination, compared to realities, or daylight pictures or scenes. They do not feel that there is any ground or reason for any such experience as that. I cannot undertake to speak for others; but one thing I know—that if it be true that by the power of the Holy Ghost a man may come to the full consciousness that his whole being has been set to the wrong key; that he is living selfishly; that the law of God, the law of the universe, the law of his own happiness, the law of unfolding in God's providence, is beneficence, but that he has taken the wrong track; that he has applied the wrong principle; that he has

unfolded in controvention of this law; that within, and without, though there may be in his nature gleams of kindness and amiableness, yet the whole force, the direction and the organizing influence of his life, are all of them selfish, and not beneficent—if it be true that a man may wake up to find that he is on a mighty stream which is carrying him away from light, from goodness, from divinity—then I do not wonder that a man should be struck through and through with conviction, and that conviction should be of the most poignant kind, and that it should be searching, painful and unappeasable, just in the ratio of the sensibility and eminent excellence of the man's nature. If a man finds himself, all parts of his development and life, at variance with the law of God, is not the discovery of this monstrous condition anything?

A man thinks himself the owner of a hundred houses. A large estate has come down to him. Street after street was carved out of this estate, and building after building went up on it. He considers himself, and is considered by others, to be a millionaire. And he rests in a feeling of security, till some day there comes to him a searching lawyer, who says, "I have, in searching, found, back at the beginning, a flaw that vitiates every title that you have. You do not own, in justice, sir, one single piece of property. Not the value of one penny in this whole estate is yours." Would it be thought a very surprising thing if that man should start up and say, as soon as he could sufficiently recover from the shock, "I, that supposed I was a millionaire, am a pauper! I do not own a penny on earth." And yet, what is the discovery that a man has lost his property—so that he has kept his manhood—compared with the revelation, the vivid sense, that a man has lost all that happiness and all that immortality which every man, in his reason, and in proportion to his reason, anticipates in the future?

Conviction of sin does not require that a man should charge himself with murders and robberies and debaucheries; it does not require that he should believe himself guilty of all manner of vulgarities and vices and crimes. It is quite enough that, whereas the law of the development of true manhood is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," he finds out that his whole being has been flowing in another direction. To find that out is ground and reason enough for distress—and for change, too.

Men have wondered whether there was any such thing as *conversion*. They have thought it to be some influence wrought by the corruscation of the spirit. They need not be in doubt on this subject. It is simple, and very easy to be understood, if these words of our

Master be taken as a test. When a man, from a life of self-seeking, and of indifference to his fellows and to God, changes the supreme end of his life, and becomes an earnest, full-purposed man of beneficence, and says, "My intellect shall think, my imagination shall invent, my sentiments shall work, my affections shall burn, for this one influence; hereafter I dedicate my being and all its forces to the service of God and the welfare of men," when a man takes this view of religion—that it is a coming into the spirit of love; that it is a translation out of the darkness of selfishness and self-seeking into the higher realm of true beneficence; when a man has come up into this state of being, is that not a translation which may well be called *being born again?* Some folks think that it must mean ecstacy, that it must mean a sense of reconciliation, that it must mean this, that or the other, because these are frequently incidents to that state.

I am not saying that when a man is born again, and brought into sympathy with the divine Heart, he does not experience reverence and rapture, and that some natures do not have convictions come through such feelings. I do not undertake to say that prayers under such circumstances are not spontaneous, and that songs of praise do not burst out spontaneously. I merely say that all these are incidental, and not characteristic, and that a man may have every one of them and not be a Christian. But no man can have what is the cause of them—if it be a cause; no man can have that intense disposition which fixes him forever on the side of God as a God of love, and fixes him forever, intelligently and purposely, on the side of happiness-making, so that he feels, "My property, my personal influence, my thought-power, my genius (if I have it), my skill, whatever capacity I have, shall make the world happier and better: I do not hold these things for myself; I hold them to make music with, for the enjoyment of others, as well as for my own enjoying; I am God's son, and God is my Father, and all men are my brethren; and there is not a better thing, nor a nobler thing, nor a more dutiful thing, than for me to spend the rest of my life in seeking to make men better and happier, and God happier, in my love,"—no man can have that and not be converted. Conversion is rising out of the spirit of self-seeking selfishness into the spirit of true love and true beneficence. And it is a noble experience.

If you thought there was such a thing as that, do you not think you would want to be converted? You do not believe in creeds, many of you, and you do not believe in liturgies, and you do not believe much in long faces and long prayers, and you do not believe in ostentatious charity—there are a hundred things that you do not believe in. Most men's creeds consist in what they do not believe, and not in what they do believe. And they are very fruitful creeds. And while there

are a thousand instruments of religion, and incidents of religion, and concomitants of religion, and collaterals, about which men have disputed, I put this question to you: If there be such a thing as, by the Holy Spirit of God, being brought out of a dominant self-seeking, into a spirit in which, morning, noon and night, the soul tends towards the promotion of the welfare of others, and the production of happiness in others, is not that something worth being converted into? Is it not something worth seeking for among men? And if that should take place in a man, would it not ordinarily make such a revolution in his disposition that one might well say of him, "He is as one raised from the dead. He is indeed born again"? Go home and have a little inquiry-meeting among yourselves, and it will not be long before you will be able to give affirmative answers to these questions.

Take the servant that has been hard to manage; that has been sly, and has secreted things; that has been fractious, and answered back again, and given you a world of torment. If that servant should become so purely simple and truly kind that from day-to-day you should find her not seeking her own, not answering back again, not *purloining*, according to the words of the apostle, polite, kind, seeking your welfare, and the welfare of everybody in the family, would not you, and everybody in the family, say, "Why, what has come over Betsy? Something has happened to her. She does not seem like herself. This cannot last long. It is too good for every day." And if that continued for some weeks, would not you say, "She is not the same creature. I never should know her. She is totally changed"? It is simply this: that before, she sought selfish ends through malign ways; she served with eye-service; but now she has come to a conscientious plane, where she is seeking to do her duty. And her kindness to you is unusual. She looks into your face with unwonted frankness. She does a thousand things that are not called for. Her acts of kindness are so abundant and so spontaneous that you cannot but feel that there is a new life awakened in her.

Suppose you should talk with her (for we hardly ever hear more than half the story in respect to household matters), and she should say, "I had been waked at untimely hours in the morning, and used to be kept up till everybody else had gone to bed—till eleven, or twelve, or sometimes, one o'clock, and nobody cared whether the washing was big or little; and I was scolded all the time; I was a mere servant; and nobody seemed to care for me. But my mistress has been going to meetings lately; and I have a great curiosity to go and see what it does to her, she is so changed. Now she is very gentle toward me; she is afraid I will work too much; she asks after my health; she comes into the kitchen sometimes, to try and help me;

and really, if I were her own daughter she could not treat me better than she has for the last few days. If it goes on so, I do not know what will come of it?" And suppose after weeks or months have passed by you should question Betsy, and say, "How about your mistress now?" and she should say, "Oh! she is a perfect angel. I never saw anything like it," you would say that *she* was born again, would you not?

When one has been running through the checkered experience of selfishness, nothing less than the inspiration of the Holy Ghost can inspire him and lift him up into a pure, consistent, uniform beneficence, that flows out, whether they think, or act, or will, or work. And everybody would say of him, "He is a new creature, born again."

Conversion and regeneration are not only really possible, but they are indispensable; and no man can enter the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost, unless he is born again. Selfishness shall not enter into the kingdom of God. Holiness means the purity with which comes a true benevolence. Without this there can be no life of bliss here or hereafter.

4. This is the true gauge by which to measure the spread, the progress, of religion in the soul. We are apt to confound the question of growth in grace with the Greek idea of acquisition, self-culture. But nothing is more stimulating to culture than a true religion. And the gauge of religion is the intensity and the productiveness of the love principle. He is the greatest, and is growing most into the likeness of Christ, not that has the most scope intellectually, not that is the most fertile in his moral nature, not that is the most rapturous in his emotions, not that sings with the most spirit and understanding, not that prays with the most devotion, but that has the strongest and finest current of disinterested benevolence. And this is the spirit of Christ's declaration, "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant." Love goes to the bottom—never to the top. Love serves, and cannot help it. A person that truly loves another always longs for something to do for that other; and the harder it is, the better. The more unexpected and the more uncalled for the service, the more declarative is that which love always wants to make an exhibition of—its intensity. Love is self-sacrifice. It is service.

And he who grows in grace is not the man who is the strictest. A man may be so strict that he shall keep the Sabbath day like a Pharisee and a Puritan (and those two would keep it so tight as to crack every cord that you put around it); a man may pray so that there shall not be an unperfumed hour through the day; a man may keep angels busy carrying up his prayers; a man may be so zealous and so active that there shall not be a neglected street that his enterprise shall not rake

and search; and yet he may not be a growing Christian. I must read this passage:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Men think that all they need is the power to speak fluently and eloquently. A great many say to themselves, "If I was only Demosthenian, or Ciceronian; if I could only get up in meetings before my brethren, and tell them what I feel; if I could only pour out my emotions in beautiful strains, with the air of such and such an eminent Christian; if I could only sing as the angels sing, I should be a good Christian." But the apostle says, "No; if you speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, it will not make you a Christian." And how he derides it!

Did you ever see anything that was, on the whole, so absolutely empty as cymbals—those great plates of brass which they carry around with big bands to make a crushing noise with; tambourines—those great rattling humbugs that are used to make music in pantomine; castanets—those rude instruments made on purpose to merely mark time or cover up the discords of other instruments? These unctuous men; these round, hollow speakers, who tell what the Lord has done for their souls, who pour out such streams of exhortation as make men's hair stand on end, and make every young neophyte feel, "Oh! that I was such a Christian!"—what says Paul about them? That they are as "sounding brass." That there is *brass* we know; and that they are *sounding* we know. "Tinkling cymbals they are," says the apostle, "mere nothings, of no account, without love." Ah! if there was only love there, then their speaking would be like the chants of those who sang together when all the sons of the morning shouted for joy; but without love it is to be considered of no account, as having no validity. A proud man that speaks beautifully, a selfish man that prays splendidly, a worldly minded man that is full of exhortation and spiritual knowledge, is, Paul says, of no account at all.

"Though I have the gift of prophecy [of instruction], and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."

Here is a prudent man. He is a grave man, and a sound, sound man. You cannot catch him anywhere. He can interpret every verse of the Bible. He has read the Bible through twice a year ever since he was a child. He can quote the whole of it, pretty much. There is not a single difficult passage that he cannot give a solution of. He is a perfect encyclopædia. He never did anything for anybody, nor cared for anybody; but he feels that he knows about everything, and is proud to think that he knows so much, and that people look up to him and idolize him. He knows how idols feel when fools worship them! And

the apostle says of this man, "Though he have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though he have faith, so that he could remove mountains, and have not love, he is nothing at all. He is a humbug—an empty show—a pretence."

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

What! can a man give his goods to feed the poor on any other ground than that of charity, or love? O yes, on a great many other grounds. It is very probable that the apostle had in his mind the donations that the imperial Cæsars were accustomed to give in Rome, where they spent millions of pounds sterling to furnish plays and theatrical shows, and distributed gifts among the people in order to secure their votes. They stole the revenues of the State in order to bribe the citizens of the State—a thing which is not strange even to modern times!

Paul says that such giving is not generosity. A man may give all his goods to feed the poor for partisan purposes, or from partisan zeal. A man may even give his body to be burned, to show how earnest and sincere he is in the cause which he has espoused, from other motives than love. And if a man has not love, all these things *profit him nothing*. Love is the only coin that passes current at the gate of heaven. All God's angels are enjoined to take taxes in nothing but that currency. You may carry up your gold, and silver, and copper, and iron, and lead; but they are good for nothing there.

He that has entered into the true spirit of love, and lives in it, and speaks of it, and sings in it, and works in it, is a Christian; but he that works, and sings, and speaks, and lives in any other spirit except that of love, is not a Christian. He has not reached the typical character which belongs to Christ's disciples. And just in proportion as this spirit grows in a man, he is growing in Christ. He is the truest Christian that is becoming the sweetest, the mildest, the easiest to be entreated, the gentlest. He that is overcoming the obliquities of his natural temper; he that is working out, one after another, every part and element of his nature, so that he lives habitually in a Christlike disposition, in a spirit of love, is the one that is growing in grace.

If then, you want to know whether you are growing in grace or not, do not ask yourself, Do you love to pray? Hundreds of men have gone to hell that loved to pray. Do you like to read your Bible? Thousands of persons have liked to read their Bible who were not Christians. Do you enjoy meetings? There are many things in meetings that people who are not Christians like to hear. A well-conducted religious meeting often presents the highest type of thought to the understanding and to the taste, in modern society. A properly served

platform leaves no part of the human mind unfed. And, therefore, for academic reasons, men may enjoy the ministrations of the sanctuary on the Sabbath, or on week-days. So that these things are not tests.

The true test question in regard to a man's growing in grace, is not whether he likes or does not like the instruments and accessories of religion, but whether or not he likes religion itself, with all its gentleness, all its self-denial, and all its fruits.

Child, do your father and mother say of you, "That child is sweeter than ever before?" If they do, you are giving evidence that you are growing in grace. Young man, do your companions say of you, "He never before was half so good a fellow as he has been since he went into the church. He has certain notions of right and wrong which he cannot be severed from, and his ideas of rectitude are rather strict; but he is always trying to keep us out of mischief, and to make us better. Wherever he goes he is cheerful, gentle, kind, beneficent, benevolent, full of goodness?" I like to hear such things said of a young man, because they are to me evidence that he is growing in grace.

If you should come to me and say, "Mr. Beecher, I do not think enough about religion: can you tell me how I can form the habit of thinking more on that subject?" I would say, "Do not trouble yourself too much about this matter. The power of meditation is one of the ripe fruits of the understanding, which comes later. Do not be discouraged if you have the main thing. A heart that breathes kindness and love—that is the main thing. Love God with all your heart, and your fellow men as yourself, and then you will grow in grace; and your growth in grace will be just in proportion to the growth of the instinct of love.

It is the true gauge, also, by which to measure the spread of the Gospel in this world. Of course, it is necessary to the spread of the Gospel that there shall be some external instruments. I do not mean that the Gospel can spread merely by the diffusion of sentiments. According to the word of the apostle:

"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

The spread of the Gospel, of course, implies the spread of knowledge—the knowledge of Christ—the knowledge of true religion in Christ Jesus; but when these things have been spread, only the external instruments of religion have been spread. The spread of kindness and good-will, rather than of avarice, or greediness, or oppression, or wrong-doing—that is the spread of religion.

We are spreading religion by sending ship-loads and ship-loads of religion to China and to India, in the shape of Bibles and tracts—and

that is all very well. We are sending missionaries to those that do not know how to use a knowledge of the Gospel, and we are staying at home and praying for the success of these missionaries, who are working against caste, and sympathizing with the people. In a variety of ways we are sending the Gospel abroad all over the world. And that is right. But it is only the letter, the outward Gospel, that we are sending. And our missionary spirit is in the ratio of that benevolence which wishes well to every human being, and which will manifest itself most toward those that want most, and toward those that are out of the way.

In order to ascertain what your missionary spirit is, I need only to find out how you treat those that are around about you—your servants, your subordinates, your adversaries, those that are poor and unpopular and despised in the community. The man that does not dare to stand up for a *bad cause*, as he calls it—that is, an unpopular cause; the man that is afraid to be associated with any new movement which is inaugurated for the welfare of mankind; the man who is afraid to take hold of the foundations of things, because these foundations lie in the mud, and he does not want to dirty his white hands, or does not want to lose his position, that man has not the missionary spirit. He does not spread the Gospel who merely spreads Bibles. The Gospel goes on wings of love; and only he who knows how to send out a self-sacrificing heart, knows how to send out the knowledge of Christ. For the knowledge of Christ cannot be interpreted by the letter. You may send abroad thousands of Bibles; but not more than one in a million can learn the knowledge of Christ by the letter. There is needed, in addition to the letter, the presence and example of the living minister, who, carrying the letter, shall, by his labors for those who cannot pay him again, by the manifestation of disinterested love toward them, show them, through long probation and trial, what religion is in its real practical form. That is the fundamental idea of the Christian minister, and of all who labor in the cause of the Gospel—not that they are men who can utter fine sentences; not that they are expositors of philosophy; not that they are interpreters of enigmas; not that they are expounders of the law; but that they are men who have themselves been made men in that very spirit of God into which they would lead others. And they will be influential in proportion as they exemplify that which they at the same time teach the philosophy of.

When, therefore, I look out on the world, and ask what has been the measure of Christianity among men, I say, There has been a great advance; very much has been done; but I do not think the millennium is going to come in your day nor in mine. When I consider that of the twelve hundred millions or more of inhabitants of the globe,

there are not, probably, five hundred millions that have ever been reached with even the reflected light of the Gospel, and that all the rest are living in barbarity, in a savage state, in heathenism, I see that though a great deal has been accomplished, a great deal more remains to be accomplished.

Look at the nations of the earth. Look at the policies which exist in society. Look at the existing state of government. Look at the laws which prevail. Look at the customs that are extant. Are these customs beneficent? Many of them are. But is beneficence the general type of the customs that prevail on the globe? Is not selfishness national, as between man and man?

Look at the maxims and proverbs of the world. More than half of them are of the devil's coinage; and they express the wisdom of the malign feelings—the wisdom of selfishness.

Look at the laws of the globe. They carry a great deal of justice with them, and serve an important end, imperfect as they are; but how unjust is justice in this world! How rude an instrument, yet, is civil society! How clumsy are the machineries and appliances of government! And how are men made more to suffer than to enjoy by the operation of national government! There is only one thing that I think is worse. Anarchy is so bad that I think that it is better to have government; but government is the next worse thing. The grossest, the cruelest, the most selfish, the most easily pervertible and perverted thing in this world, is government. The history of government through the ages that are passed is a history red—nay, *lurid*. The history of law is the history of crushing.

Look at the progress of order. The world has been bedewed with tears by the struggles of what is called *order*. The spirit of national life and organized society is coarse, rude, barbaric, hard.

What is the spirit of Christian nations to-day? What is our position as a boasted Christian nation? Let a man search into our civil policy; into the spirit of our jurisprudence; into the spirit of our statesmanship; into the spirit of our commerce; into our administrations in every direction, and he will find that they are sadly wanting in this foundation element of love.

Whatever may be true of individual households, of churches here and there, and of single creeds, can you say that the community has become Christianized so that it is characterized by the spirit of purity and true love? Is not self-seeking yet the law of national life here? And we boast of being in advance of all other nations in justice and equity and righteous dealing. If any other nation boasted half as much as the Americans do, they would be called conceited and vain. It is only because we are so smart that it is not conceit in us! We are

the Christians *par excellence* on the globe. And not only does our Christianity take the precedence of that of all other nations, but everything we have is superior to anything that belongs to others. We have a better country, and a better government, and better laws, and better usages, and better scenery, and better trees, and better rocks, and better water, and a better summer, and a better winter, and a better everything, than anybody else has. We are brought up to admire everything that is American, and to hate the haughty British, the frog-eating French, and everything that is foreign. O! We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us! And yet, when you come to look at the great features of life in this country, at the actual display of this spirit of good-will, and kindness, and true love, how barbaric we are still!

Look across the sea, and behold those nations that are armed to the very teeth. Nations are to-day just what, in the old feudal times, barons' castles were—private dwellings armed against invasion day and night, and all the time. Look at the hundreds of thousands of men of France, that are kept in camps; and look at the almost millions of idle men that are supported by those that labor; look at those that are operating against industry in both ways—by making other men's work in a measure unproductive, and by eating up what they produce to support them in the maintenance of brute armed force. Look at the condition of Germany, associated with the Prussian Empire, armed, and waiting for conflict. Look at Austria, that is recuperating, that is like the lion wounded but getting well, and will soon be ready to strike again with his crippled but now well-nigh recovered paw. Look at the Russian Empire, in which there are signs that betoken war. Listen to the sounds that are in the earth. What are they? They are the sounds of the ponderous trip hammer running night and day in the shop where deadly weapons are made. They are the sounds of the gurgling red-hot iron in the foundry where cannon and other munitions of war are cast. They are the sounds that come up from the yards where night and day men are at work building ships for warlike purposes. All over the world the ingenuity of mechanics is exercised for the production of more efficient means of inflicting brute violence. And has Christianity spread?

We are going to have, in September, the meeting of a Christian alliance representing the Christian nations of the globe. They are coming together to rejoice and triumph over, and to seek to promote, the spread of the Gospel in the world. A kind of Protestant Œcumenical Council, it is to be; and we are going to see if we cannot make the Lord Jesus Christ Pope infallible! And yet, what a sad thing it will be for them to tell what is the condition of things in all the globe! What a sad thing it will be for them to tell how the world is yet

ruled by Satan, with a triple crown of selfishness on his head; and how lust, license and avarice are supreme!

Ah! my brethren, there is a work to be done yet on earth. "The kingdoms of this world are not yet the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And when he comes to reign, it must be after centuries of summers have ripened the human heart, and brought forth other fruit than this acerb and bitter fruit of hating and of fighting.

5. We are able, in the light of this test of true religion, to form some judgment respecting the religious sects, and the different churches that are swarming upon the earth, in altercation and in strife, either holy or unholy. The earth is filled with different denominations, and they are fighting each other, in apostolicity, in authority, and in orthodoxy, or purity of doctrine.

Now, let me not be thought to decry organization, nor apostolicity, whatever that may be—I hope it is something good! All churches ought to be apostolic, and all churches ought to be invested with authority, and all churches ought to be orthodox, and all churches claim that they are; and they are rivals of each other. What I wish to do, is not to decide between them, but to ask you whether in the history of Christianity it has been a fact that the emphasis of the church has all been put on this—that true religion is *loving*. One man says that you are in the true church when you are in the church that has been regularly handed down from bishop to bishop from the very apostle's touch, and when you have been duly confirmed by its ordinances. Another man thinks that that is the true church which conforms exactly to "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

A farmer shears his sheep, and has a huge heap of wool. The scourer scours it, and the carder cards it, and the spinner spins it, and the weaver weaves it, and the tailor cuts it out, and makes it into the the soldier's dress, and the yeoman's dress, and the child's dress; and here stands the man pointing to the sheep, and saying, "Look at this vast wardrobe. This is *the wool that was once delivered from the sheep.*" After it has gone through the hands of the scourer, and the carder, and the spinner, and the weaver, and the tailor, and has been made into every fantastic shape, they say it is *the wool that was once delivered to them.*

The apostles gave to the world a few elementary truths, and men have taken them, and scoured them, and carded them, and spun them, and woven them, and cut them up, and put them into priests' garments, and elders' garments, and deacons' garments, and all sorts of garments; and now they are quarrelling over the "faith which was once delivered to the saints." As if the doctrines which they hold would be recognized by those to whom they are ascribed! There is

many a doctrine that is called Pauline theology, of which Paul, if it were presented to him, would say, "What stuff is this?" And I think there are very few churches on earth at present that Christ could be made a member of. The qualifications of most of them are, I think, such as would exclude him from membership in them. And men differ and are contending, and are filled with violence and temper, on account of the various claims which they have set up. And they go so far that they have not a spirit of true Christian charity. Having received the benediction of the Holy Ghost, and having proved themselves to be lineal successors of the apostles who were appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and were his representatives, they have shown this spirit of love by burning men up, by throwing them into prisons, and by making them wear chains all their lives. I believe that, much as has been the joy that has been made in this world, more has been the misery that has been made by men who represented religion and called the church the *Church of God*. The tears have been ocean-deep, and the anguish has been heaven-high; and no historian's pen can ever compass that story of divine anguish. One single monarch—Philip II. of Spain—slew in one nation more than eighty thousand men, and went avowedly to cut off every man, woman and child in the Netherlands. For the sake of his faith he would not have hesitated to devastate the globe. While the Mahomedans were thundering at the gates of Eastern European Capitals to propagate their faith, we were thundering back from the West to propagate our faith. The cannon, the spear and the dungeon have for hundreds of years, been occupying a very large portion of the time of those that called themselves the descendants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we have been engaged in this kind of persecution. If a man does not believe just as we do, how sweet soever his life may be, however pure and gentle and large he may be, however much his conduct may be characterized by the spirit of love, if we know that he sets aside the articles of the church, and does not believe in them, that ends it. We put doctrine against love. Though a man has all love, if he has not doctrine, we reject him. Whereas, if there is one thing that is unquestionable, it is that the only thing that doctrine is good for, is to make the life what it should be.

And yet, the vast system of man-made doctrines, and the vast retinue of services, and the vast organizations of the church, have not tended, in the main, to produce gentleness, and peace, and love, and beneficence. On the contrary, they have tended to produce envies, and jealousies, and conflicts, and cruelties unutterable. And the practice of the Church of Christ on earth for a thousand years has been simply infernal. I know what I say. I speak no hasty words. I declare

that through long periods the characteristic actions of the organized external churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have better befitted the administrations of devils than of men. This externality, with all its pretense of authenticity, apostolicy and traditional regularity, is continually vaunted and held up. And when men say what I have said, and what I say again, and what I will testify to so long as the breath of life is in me, that the spirit of Christ is love; and that he who truly loves God and men is a Christian, no matter in what church he is found, nor in what circumstances he is placed, men say, "You are knocking the foundation out from under things." In other words, the world has taken up the instruments of religion and put them against religion itself, and preferred the instruments.

Now, I take religion; and if I am let alone I will not deny its instruments. I believe in instruments; I believe in doctrine; I believe in church organization; I believe in the utility of wisely administered ordinances. These things are important. But I say that wherever the two come in conflict, I must take religion. No casket is ever so precious as the jewel that the casket carries. Religion is the jewel, and the church is the casket which is carrying it; and we must learn that the spirit of the Lord, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, humility and gentleness and meekness in Christ Jesus are the signs and tests of Christ present in anybody's heart. And where these are found in a man, do not stop to ask what name he is called by, but take him, for Christ is in him. They are Christ's, not who are in the regular church, but who are in the regular heart, in the regular spirit.

Sometimes people think that this is undervaluing ordinances. No, it is not. It is laying a law upon them. It is laying a law upon preaching that will be most wholesome to it. When men cease to worship outward form; when they come to see the interior of things; when they come to see the actual condition of things, and to act accordingly, the world will be better, the church will be purer, men will be truer Christians, and the cause of God will advance faster upon the earth, and all mankind will sooner behold the salvation of our God.

When you look over the condition of society, nothing but the most abject self-complacency can lead men to say, "The world is pretty well off. What is the use of disturbing things any more? What is the use, just as soon as you have got through with one revolution, as soon as one war is finished, of going into some new-fangled notion, some new progress, some new cause?"

Do you, then, think that the world is ripe in love? Do you really think that men, as you know them, are good enough? Do you think that the spirit of true Christian love dwells in them? Do you think that the relations of all classes in society to each other are equitable,

and in accordance with a true spiritual beneficence? Do you think that the men who groan at the bottom of society are there rightfully? Do you think that the laws of labor have all been explored, and settled on the basis of true Christian beneficence? Do you think that the relation of the sexes is all settled, once for all, and that the whole form and structure of the household, and all the elements of wise and virtuous living are found out, and that the law of purity and love is already exemplified, and that the world is so nearly perfect that it only needs a little rubbing and polishing before it will do?

Every thirty years a generation die. And what a host of men do pour into the eternal world in that period! Do they go infernal or angelic? What is the condition of those multitudes that we are continually sending to the other world?

Oh my soul! when I think what man is, and is to be, then it is that infidelity tempts me most. Then it is that I most have to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." If God is Father, and he feels as I feel as father, then why has he lingered so long? Does God never weep when *the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now?* Does God sit happy? Is there peace in heaven? Why is darkness yet upon the globe? Why are men so coarse? Why are they slow to understand even what religion is? Why do we idolize everything but love, and then tread that so ruthlessly under foot? Yet, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and that this divine spirit of love never came of man's invention, nor from any physical source, but from God. It is the inbreathing of the other life. And I do know that there is a spirit at work which, though it lingers, will at last bring in summer, and that the whole earth shall see the salvation of the Lord, and that gentleness, and mercy, and goodness, shall, with justice and truth and righteousness, rule the earth. Even so, Lord Jesus! come quickly.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

O Lord our God! the whole earth doth wait for thy coming. Through ages thy servants have been praying, Let thy kingdom come. Why doth it tarry? Why is it yet delaying? Knowledge is running to and fro. Men in every part of the earth are awaking. And why is there not sent abroad the spirit of love, and concord, and kindness? Thou, the merciful, the forgiving, the soul-rejoicing Saviour, where art thou? There is power in the earth, and men and nations are dashed one against another; but where art thou, the Merciful? There is wisdom in the earth, and men are building up the outward face of things; they are covering the sea and land with the trophies of their skill and power; they are developing nations in refinement; and they are multiplying conveniences around about them—they are living as better animals than ever; but where is thy Spirit? Where is that unity of kindness that makes one love another as himself? Where art thou, O loving Saviour? who, rather than give suffering, didst suffer; who, rather than smite unto death, didst thyself die; who didst give thy own loving life, and lay it down, and take it again, and dost wear it, now, forever, for beneficence in sympathy and love? We beseech of thee that we may see the signs of this thy second coming. Having come once to reveal, to teach, to inspire, come now to victory, we beseech of thee. Let thy heart-beat be stronger than all the forces of this world; and let thy blood become the blood of kindred shed for the sins of the world. At last may it bring into blood-kinship all the nations of the globe, by a living blood, an atonement of love, an unquenchable power, that shall consume selfishness, and teach men to live by their higher nature. Lord, when wilt thou come to deliver the captives? They are many. There are many that groan beneath thrones, and under chains, and in dungeons; but more are there that groan beneath the weight of that sin and that captivity of the flesh which prevail so widely in all the earth. When wilt thou rescue man, and give him birth out of the flesh and into the spirit? Grant, we beceech of thee, that that sacred, secret, all cleansing fire may come forth from thee, and that we may behold men, indeed new creatures in Christ Jesus, walking forth in the fragrance of divine love, and full of the beauty of thine own heavenly nature, carrying not alone the letter, but the spirit of the Gospel, every whither.

We beseech thee to forgive our sins of selfishness, and self-seeking, and self-indulgence, and heedlessness. Forgive us all that has made us unlike thee. And we pray that thou wilt inspire us truly with more than penticostal favor, that we may go forth bearing the sacred message, and the sacred spirit of the Master, everywhere. We pray for all classes and conditions of men. We pray that all the sufferings and self-denials, that all the turmoil and care of life, may work for the spiritual emancipation of those who are exercised thereby. We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant more and more that every one may live, not by the sight nor for the senses, but by faith and for the Spirit.

We pray that thou wilt comfort all those that are gathered together this morning, mourners in the midst of this joyful assembly, with sad memories going back evermore to their trouble and sorrow. May they see through their tears, as Mary did. May they understand thee, speaking to them and comforting them.

And grant to be near to all that have come up this morning conscious of weakness, and seeking to be strengthened to-day in the inner man. Grant that their faith and hope may be revived, and that they may feel, in the presence of their God, that they have been crowned to-day. And may they go forth bearing a sceptre of power before which temptations shall yield and depart.

Bless all those who are strangers in our midst. And if they are lonely, and seem solitary in the midst of multitudes, and almost desponding in the

errands of life, still grant that they may look to their Father's God, and pluck up courage and patience to await the opening of thine opportunity. And may none find their faith failing them. May those that watch, and those that wait, and those that weep, and those that pant beneath burdens, and those that cry out and have no answer, and those that in darkness lift up hands unto thee, and do not feel thy touch—may all of them, still have faith to wait. For thou shalt appear unto every one that waits patiently for thee.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt bless the labors of this congregation. May the truth be a living truth, here, cleansing not only but comforting, enlightening, rejoicing. And we pray thy blessing to rest upon the officers and teachers of our Sunday-schools, and upon all the classes. May the young be brought up in the fear of God, and early enter into the sacred life of Christian love. And we pray that those who go out every Sabbath day into the streets, into the highways, into the jails and hospitals, to preach the Gospel, to comfort those that are sick, to cheer and encourage reformation in those that are out of the way, may themselves have the spirit of the living God, and be clothed with the power which is from on high.

We beseech of thee that we may not be made indifferent by our blessings sitting together in heavenly places, and rejoicing in all the privileges of the sons of God. May we not forget, nor be slow to succor, those that are without these privileges, or that care for none of them. May our hearts be merciful in proportion as we are blessed of God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt sanctify us by the experience of life. Grant thy divine Spirit, that shall not only guide, but cheer and sanctify. And grant that so long as we live we may walk in fellowship of the saints, in the communion of the Spirit, and in the hope of everlasting life.

Look upon all the earth. Behold the nations that sit desolate and in darkness. Behold all that are struggling and seeking to emancipate themselves from despotism. Behold all those nations that are jealously guarding the privileges of the few, and treading upon the rights of the many. Lord, we beseech of thee that thou wilt appear the Vindicator, not in wrath, not in fear, not in blood. Come with persuasion. Come with the transforming summer of love. Come and bring men together in the bonds of sacred fellowship. Teach men to overcome evil with good. By the might of thine heart, and not by the terror of thine hand, rule over all the earth, as thou dost rule in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit.—*Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the manifestation of thy Son. In the dark night, how sweet and fair shines that Star of Bethlehem through the troubled cloudy sky, breaking apart, at times, to let its light over the sea, storm-tossed. How bright is the truth of loving which thou hast made possible to our understanding! We have felt some breaths of the same spirit, and there are days and hours in which we rise up into the tranquility and peacefulness of that utter love to God and to men, and in darkness and under the domination of evil feelings we fall away, and forget everything but to doubt. O Lord! we are as thy servant of old, that would walk with thee upon the sea, but sank at each step. Pluck us by the hand. Bring us into the ship indeed.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may live more and more in the spirit of sonship. More and more may we, by the power of true love, labor for the upbuilding of thy cause, and rejoice everywhere to see men happier. And

with every word, and every look, and every self-denial, may we seek to increase the sum of joy in the world. Oh! how many are making misery, and making men cry! May we be among those who shall make them smile. May we seek to make the heart happier. May we seek to rub away the crease that sorrow and care have put upon the brow. Grant that we may make the heart rich. And so may we live and labor, until thou hast need of us above. And then solve all mysteries. Then, in the one dying, give us knowledge and life, and bring us where all shall know even as we are known. And to the Father, the Son, and the spirit, shall be praises everlasting.—*Amen.*

THE IDEAL

OF

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

"Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."—JNO. XIV. 22, 23.

No susceptible nature ever reads these marvelous chapters containing Christ's love-talk, in the seclusion of home, and in the last hours that he was spending peacefully with his disciples, without feeling that they are full of meanings which ordinary life furnishes no clue for. Barren or shallow natures are apt to feel that they are extravagant; that they are a kind of spiritual sentimentalism. Venerating natures, that yet do not reach up to the level of these discourses, are wont to think that they are mystical and marvelous. But great hearts have always felt that they were the unfolding of a life of which they had had glimpses, and toward which they were striving, but which had no perfect realization in their experience, and probably none in the experience of any except the Master himself.

In the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and perhaps seventeenth chapters of John, there is a more perfect dwelling upon the ideal Christian character and life than in any equal compass in the New Testament. And according to the teaching of our Master, here and elsewhere, the perfect Christian life has the following great constituent elements.

1. It is a life of vital unity with God. It may or may not be consciously in unity with him; but the teaching is, that, as the body derives its stimulation, its food and force, from its contact with the material globe, and from its obedience to physical laws, so that which Christianity includes derives its vitality from its connection with the invisible God. Its force and its food are from no lower source.

In our text Christ promises, not obscurely, to his disciples, that if

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they love him, and if they will but open the door through which alone God can enter into the human soul, the great golden gate of love, he will come in, and the Father with him, and that there shall be a love-life begun.

2. It is declared, as an element of the typical Christian experience, that it shall be a life of perfect peace.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

And again, elsewhere, we find the apostles interpreting this:

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding [or analysis], shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Here is what the apostles spoke out of their own experience—an experimental interpretation of this promise of the Master. The "fruit of the Spirit" is said to be "love, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost."

Here, then, are two great elements—first, a unity with God through love; and second, the effect, which is a dominating peace.

3. This state is declared to be one which delivers the soul from the power and the domination of sin. When the soul has risen into this state of communion with God, and has entered upon this deep spiritual tranquility, it is declared to be sinless—a matter which has perplexed, and annoyed beyond measure, interpreters and experimental Christians. Such language as this, in the fifth chapter of the first epistle of John, has been very much a matter of debate:

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

This is another peculiarity of the Christian state, *par excellence*, that it is sinless; that men have ministered to them, not simply "joy in the Holy Ghost," not simply Christ's "peace which passeth all understanding," but the power to "overcome the world."

4. It is taught us, unequivocally, that in the typical Christian state of mind, there are forces developed of which, in our lower natural state, we have no hint, no warning; forces that are not ordinarily developed, and that cannot be developed by any secular and purely wordly education; forces which we are accustomed to call miraculous.

If you will turn to Matthew's Gospel, you will find Christ enunciating this in the most distinct manner, in the seventeenth chapter. The disciples had asked him why they could not cast out these evil spirits.

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief."

It was because they were living on a lower plane where the power to do such things was not known.

"For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

Lest it may be thought that this was a transient and metaphorical teaching, listen again to a declaration in the same book, and the twenty-first chapter, where the fig-tree was cursed, and it withered away, and the disciples, remarking it, were astonished.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Now, that this was not understood by the apostles themselves as being a mere metaphorical or figurative promise, is shown in the directions which are given by them for the healing of sickness, by prayer of faith and by their own power of working miraculous cures, which they held in reliance upon, or in explicit faith of, this declaration of the Master.

Here, then, are the four great elements which constitute Christian experience. It is a life of unity with God, developing the supreme power of love in the soul. It is a life in which there is such an influence exerted upon the mind that all the soul is perfectly harmonized, and yet perfectly alive, so that it rises into a "peace which passeth all understanding." It is a state in which such is the power of this divine influence of joy and peace in love that the man has control over himself and over his circumstances, and sins not. It is a life and experience which goes still further than this. When a man has been lifted up into this state of feeling, he is existing upon a plane in which the relation of his mind to matter itself is changed, and new forces and new possibilities are involved. And that which a man cannot be and cannot do when he is living on the lower plane, he finds, strangely, that he is able to be and to do when he has risen into this higher spiritual condition. He has power over natural law. We have power now over natural law; but it is in a lower way. It is because I have power over natural law that I am a husbandman, and that you are a mechanic. It is the knowledge of natural law, and the knowledge of how to use it, that means skill and ability among men.

The Christian development, the typical Christian experience, it is declared, carries this power over nature still higher. And there are forces in the human soul that are developed at last which give a man a more permanent control over nature than is possible to the common state.

Here, then, Christian experience has the divine presence and a joyful companionship. It lifts up the soul above the agitations of human life and heart-experience; it frees it from the power of all ordinary temptations that assail it; and it develops a simple force which gives law and knowledge and power over the physical world, to an extent

which is not vouchsafed to ordinary conditions of life. Such is the Christianity of the New Testament.

I remark, in view of the forgoing exposition

First, that this Christianity, or this development of Christian experience, is but the unfolding of the elements which belong to every man's nature. It is the unfolding of latent forces that belong by constitution to the nature of the human mind. Every human soul has this latent power.

It is not, then, a special superaddition in the form of a technical result in Christianity. Christ, who was the sublimest interpreter, the grandest natural philosopher, that ever lived, unfolded to us the knowledge of this hidden life of the soul, and taught the method of disclosure, and that it is the birthright of man to come to this higher range of development, of power and of experience.

It is by spiritual agencies, and not by physical appliances, that it is to be achieved. It is by love, and not by the passions and appetites; it is by the exercise of the supersensuous faculties, and not the physical senses; it is not by science, but by faith, that we are to come into this higher state. But all men have in them the roots of that which may be, by the divine Spirit, developed into this higher fruit of Christian experience.

Now, of this view, which I have not attempted to modify, but which I have made strong on purpose, that it may strike you as something quite transcendental—as something far above the ordinary actual experiences of human life—of this view, you will say, "Does it not rule out the experience of Christendom, generically considered? If that which you have declared to be the true Christian experience, *is* the true Christian experience, are there any Christians? Are there churches full of them? Are there houses full of them? And does it not strike despair to souls that are conscious of their inability to reach any such view, and to make any such attainment as this?"

Those are fair questions, and I will answer them fairly. The answer depends upon whether this Christian character which I have presented to you as the true experience of Christian life is the average experience, and the condition of all hope and all acceptance with God; or whether it is the typical, the ideal character, or pictorial view of that which is possible, and to which the Master is bringing his disciples. It will depend upon whether it is understood that, in practice, this is an experience that is reached gradually, by gradations, or whether it is understood to be something which every man has when he is converted. It depends upon whether it is regarded as a state which men come into at once, or whether it is that teleologic or final condition toward

which every man is aiming, and which he hopes to reach either here or hereafter.

This can be settled, I think, in no way so safely as by watching Christ's own practice in gathering his followers. He certainly taught in such glowing words, and repeated his teaching in such a variety of ways, that no man can avoid comprehending it without doing violence to the spirit and letter of the New Testament.

He taught the reality and the possibility of this high state of soul which I have been delineating to you; and he taught that this was preëminently the Christian state—the ultimate object of aspiration among men. To be in communion with God; to be perfected in love; to be in so high a range of being, in consequence, as to have absolute self-harmony and tranquility and perfect peace; to be by this exaltation lifted above the ordinary annoyances and temptations and sins of humanity; to have the power of thinking things, knowing things, and doing things which do not belong to lower states of experience—this, if anything, was taught in the New Testament, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

But then, we find that he did not make it the test of discipleship that men should be in that state. While he taught it, and while he held it up as a picture, he did not say that no one was a Christian artist who could not paint in himself just such a picture. He, on the other hand, showed that there were gradations allowed, practically, in admitting men to the fellowship and life of the Christian.

For, there were some that would have said to him then, as there are multitudes that would say to him now, "We cannot rise to this conscious personal communion. We earnestly desire to love God, but at best the conception of God is very vague and fugitive, and we cannot love God as we do father and mother." And, out of condescension to that, Christ says,

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

It is as if he had said, "Can you not yet rise into that emotive and conscious glow of love toward the unseen and invisible Father? Very well, then, take the next step to it. Here are his commandments. Put yourself in the line of the divine love, and keep these commandments, and we will accept that." And so he went down to their infirmity in that direction.

But there were a great many who could not even live a life of obedience, in distinction from a life of emotion. That was too hard for the poor and the miserable. And he says to them, "Well, then, follow me, and learn what you can. Become scholars of mine, and I will teach you, from day to day, what to do. If you are able, love and triumph. Or, if you cannot do that, obey and grow. Or, if you can-

not even comprehend the precepts, then follow me, and I will day by day teach them to you." In other words, "I will accept a desire to learn, a willingness to be taught, and compliance as fast as possible with what you are taught."

But there were some, apparently, even lower than that. One of the most marvelous passages in this regard, in the New Testament, is that which is contained in the tenth chapter of Matthew, where Christ says,

"He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple"—

What! if he does not understand anything about decrees, fore-ordination, election or reprobation; if he does not understand anything about the Trinity; if he does not understand anything about the atonement, or the ground and reasons of it; if he does not understand anything about the church, or about holy days and holy practices? Yes; here it stands, without a single mitigation.

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

We find, then, on the one side, the wonderful disclosure of the possible experience of the soul. And our Master says, "This is that to which you are to come." And we find, on the other side, the same Master saying to men, "If, practically, you cannot do any more in this direction than to have good wishes toward those who are living a Christian life, and you will help them, if it be but to give them a cup of cold water, you shall not lose your reward."

The ideal is exalted, and immense; but the practical administration under that ideal is full of gradations—for I have not given you half, or one in twenty, of the gradations that fall out in the actual administration of this ideal in the Lord Jesus Christ himself, going down almost to zero, and amounting to this: "If there is in mankind one person who is willing to follow me, and learn, and learn how to practice what he learns, that willingness shall be sufficient. He shall be called one of mine. He shall be a disciple." Christ did not demand the full type of Christian experience as a condition of acceptance. He set the ideal before men; and then he accepted, or promised to accept, every one who would sincerely strive after that ideal, no matter at what point he stood, from the highest endowment of genius down to the very child himself. Every man who, looking toward this ideal of purity and peace and divinity in his soul, says, "I will follow after it;" every man who, pointing toward this ideal, says, "I accept this life, and I will try to realize it"—every such man, no matter how slowly he advances, no matter how imperfectly he lives, has the sympathy of Christ. Of all strivers in that direction, he says, "They

shall be mine." He calls them his *scholars*. And those that go to school, or are willing to go to school to Christ, to learn by what steps they may be good; those that are willing to go to this university of experience; those that are seeking for this graduating power of Christianity, however limited may be their attainments, their knowledge, their victories, are pupils. If a man has gone into that school sincerely to learn, and is willing to practice what he learns, he is accepted of God.

Let me now make the applications.

In the first place, to go back to a figure that I have already introduced, Christ opens a school. He marks out the grades. He pictures the highest results that are attainable in a Christian—though they are not given in full disclosure. He also shows that while this is the ideal after which all scholars are to strive, the lowest form, in his view, is as really in the school as the highest form.

When a young person begins a course of liberal education, he says to himself, "I propose to be admitted." He is to become, it may be, an artist; or, it may be, an engineer; or, it may be, a lawyer; or, it may be, a preacher; but he says, "My first step is to learn to read."

Some strong-brained boy, born in the woods out West, and brought up without the slightest learning; some Abraham Lincoln of a boy, lies on his belly by a pine knot, marking from a book, with a rude stick, letters in the sand, and saying, "I *will* learn;" and there goes by a Yale or Cambridge student that has just graduated, and is fuller of knowledge than he ever will be again; and people say to him, "What are you?" "A scholar, sir," he replies. "Oh, yes," they say; "and we have scholars here, too." And they open a door and point to that boy of the blacksmith's forge, who has raked the embers together to study by; or to the boy of the cabin, who is lying by a pine knot, uncouth, awkward, rude in his dress, but with a much-fingered book, studying the profound mystery of addition or subtraction, or trying to spell letters into a word,—and say, "There is a scholar." "You call that a scholar, do you?" "We do. Do not you call him one?"

When I see old *Cœur de Lion* in the picture of a battle, when I see the gigantic form that is shown in athletes among men, how strange it seems to me to be carried into a nursery and have the blanket thrown off from the cradle, and see lying there a little six-months-old boy, that cries for milk, and that only, and cannot help himself—and then to hear such a helpless, diminutive creature called a man! And compared with this giant in the field, it is a pretty poor beginning for a man. But it is the Lord's ordinance that the higher any creature goes in this world, the further he has to run before he makes a jump. Flies, that are very low, are born perfect flies to start with, and

have the full use of themselves from the moment that they are out of the egg. And as you rise in the animal kingdom, the longer the life, the more important the functions, the higher the scale of being, the longer the period of development. And as man is the head of creation, the furthest is he from himself at the start, and the longest has he to wait before he comes to himself.

It is true, therefore, that in that cradle lies a man. But it is all folded up in its case. There are the rudiments which are to be developed into a man. The proudest artist, the noblest orator, the most brilliant warrior, the grandest statesman, was no bigger than that child once, nor different from it. And it is in the power of that child to rise, circumstances favoring. And it is perfectly proper to say that he is in the line of manhood.

Here are the disclosures of Christ as to what is possible in the human soul. He declares what religion is to do for men. What is it to do for them? Is it to give them a few better clothes? Is it to keep them from eating and drinking too much? Is it to improve their morals? Is it to make good bankers and merchants and nice citizens of them? Yes; but these things are only buttons, the trimmings, as it were. They are mere incidental things. The great work of religion is soul-building. That which is meant is the divine power which descends on the soul, unfolding its secret, latent capacities, until it rises into possible commmunion with God, face to face; until it has transcendent harmony and absolute peace which passes understanding; until it is able to tread under foot all ordinary sins; until it is able to speak even as God speaks, as a creator, being a son of God, and the heir of heaven. That which is meant is such an unfolding, such a translation, such a spiritual education, such a scope or sphere or power as this. And that it is which is held up in the New Testament.

But Christ says, "I do not demand that every man who comes into my church shall be all this at once, any more than I demand that a man shall be a man before he has been a babe. Almost as far back as you have a mind to, only say that you put yourself in the line of growth, only say that you take these great blessings, and are traveling, and learning, and going on toward perfection, and I will take you in." This is the spirit of the New Testament, and this is the doctrine of the ideal and the real, and of the relation of the practical in a struggling Christian life to the realization of this blessed ideal.

Here, too, you see what has been the confusion in men's minds. There are many persons who have supposed that they could assume this ultimate condition, this final state, which men come to through the ages sometimes, in rare cases, from individual development and disclosure of being. Fanatical natures have supposed that this could be

assumed as the gift of God immediately upon their conversion, and have gone off into fantastic experiences, into strange nervous developments, which they supposed to belong to this mystic disclosure of Christ in the soul.

It does not invalidate these declarations, that there are so many counterfeits and so many mistakes in respect to them. This is that condition toward which we are to be brought. It is the condition toward which we are walking and striving. But no man comes into it at first and at once. We *grow* into it. We *unfold* into it.

So there is hope for every earnest, sincere soul that wants to be one with God. For any man that is in doubt doctrinally; for any man that from the force of education finds himself unable to accept this or that particular category of doctrine, or this or that mode of stating a particular doctrine, there is great consolation. People say to me, "Can a man be a Christian and not believe in this, that and the other thing?" It is very difficult to say what a man may not lack and yet be a Christian. When a man is in the perfected state, he will doubtless be "armed and equipped as the law directs;" but while he is on the way to it, and striving after it, it does not follow that he must be right ecclesiastically, dogmatically, or even practically, in any one of a hundred things. He may be as full of imperfections as a boy that is beginning to write is full of bad spelling and awkward letters. He may become a prince in literature, he may be even an editor, some day; and yet judging from what his beginnings are, you would say, "It is impossible for him to become anything?" All these imperfections are to be corrected. They will correct themselves. Bad writing corrects itself, and bad spelling corrects itself. Men get used to good spelling. They never learn it, exactly. It is an art, rather than an attainment. And so it is in respect to spiritual things. I do not care what point you start from—whether from the naturalism of Persia, or from the starting-point of truth and lies among the Brahmins, or from among the naturalists of scientific times, or from the outer circle of the Christian sects—from among those that are remotely orthodox, or almost orthodox, or quite orthodox, or more than orthodox, or super-hyper-orthodox; no matter where you start, the fact is just this. You have human nature in you; and that human nature has the seeds of this grand Christian development. And you may start where you will, so that you *start*, so that you put yourself under the drill of the divine spirit of love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and so that you work having that ultimate object in view, with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. These other things are not without their validity and value and effects but there are none of them that are vital. So far as they are not hindrances,

but helps, they come through this power of God which is unfolding us, and bringing us to that perfect manhood which God thought of when he made man, and which is the typical idea in his creation.

We see, secondly, the popular fallacy in respect to Christians and Christian life. Men suppose that when we are born again by the Spirit of God, we are brought into a perfected state—a state so much more eminent than that out of which we came, that it may be called a *miraculous translation;* and that instead of looking for sin and weakness and imperfection in himself, the Christian ought never to do anything wrong. A Christian is one, certainly, that sets out heartily to do what is right, and means to persevere in doing what is right; but I pray you, if I start from here to go across the continent by the northern route to California or the Columbia river, am I not a pilgrim, a traveler, bound to see the Pacific ocean, though I do not travel in a direct course? Does it follow that I shall take a short cut? Does it follow that I shall go forward every day? Does it follow that I may not sometimes sicken by the way, and wait for weeks? Does it follow that I may not mistake my path and take circuitous courses? Does it follow that I shall not be beguiled into a hunting or botanizing expedition? Does it follow that I shall not be charmed with some settlement, and persuaded to remain there for months? All these things may take place, and yet I may not give up my purpose of crossing the continent and seeing the Pacific shore. I may have all these aberrations and delays, and yet they may not change the grand fact that I am on my way to yonder distant coast.

A child means to be educated; and that purpose is not to be invalidated by the fact that his mother keeps him at home very often to do house-work, or that she permits him to go a visiting or playing, or that he plays truant (for some children—not good children, not nice Sunday-school-book children, of course, but some children—do play truant), and forgets his books, and looks after flies, and butterflies, and what not, and is full of whims and caprices; full of spirit to-day, and all deliquescence to-morrow; full of all manner of infirmities. He is a scholar, and is getting his education, notwithstanding all these hindrances.

And so a Christian is Christ's scholar, and is in Christ's school, and his heart is set on education, and his purpose is to learn; but oh! with what lingerings! with what accidents! with what diversions to the right and to the left! And yet, taking it year by year, his eye is on the one object which he has set out to attain, and he means that more than anything else, and is following on after it.

Suppose a person says to me, "Is X. C. a member of your church?" and I, having a great opinion of him, joyfully say, "Yes sir—yes."

« Well, I thought so. He cheated me yesterday." And my reply, naturally, to him, is, "Only once?" I would be glad to compromise at that. When I put the spiritual law of God on the interpretation of a man's thoughts, what is murder? How many murders there are committed by good men! When I judge a man by the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," how much crime there is that goes on under forms of law! How much there is of selfishness that goes on under the name of benevolence! How little there is of essentially disinterested love, even in good men!

But do you expect that men who are going to school will never make the blunders which belong to education? This world is God's school-house, and I am trying, as his teacher, to set before you prescribed courses which you ought to follow; and you are mainly seeking to follow them; but not without blunderings and stumblings. You are not saints, nor anywhere near saints. Nobody is a saint till he is dead; and it is not safe to call anybody one till then. In this life—especially while in the midst of its struggles and strifes—how few men there are who can draw a straight line to the ideal, and then keep on that line?

"We have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Men are like the vessels in a fleet that seek, with currents and winds, to make a given point or rendezvous. Some move forward in a direct line, some are driven far in one direction, and some are driven far in another; but at last they all cast anchor in the one harbor. And so, while sailing across the sea of life, some men keep their course, some are drifted in one way, and some are drifted in another way; but we trust that they will all make the harbor at last, and cast anchor, and be saved.

Nor are men to be supposed to be saved because they have put themselves in the right career ecclesiastically. Many persons blame men, as I have intimated, because they are so erratic and imperfect in their Christian lives. My reply is, that this is a matter which belongs to the human condition under which our great strife is taking place. But there are a great many others who say that when once a man is in the right church, and is properly ticketed and labeled, he is like an express package, that will either go through or else be settled for by the company. There is a great deal of anxiety as to which is the true church, and there is a world of investigation and study on that very point. If men would study half as much, and strive half as hard, to do the thing which the New Testament really requires—to love justice and mercy; to fear God and serve him; to follow on and know the Lord in the way of love, and peace, and purity of mind; if men would

spend their time in doing that half as long or half as actively as they labor in ascertaining about the apostolicity of the Church, the canonicity of rules and regulations, the orthodoxy of creeds, and the whole complicated, ponderous machinery of ecclesiastical school-houses, there would be more saints and more nascent saints than there are now. The fact is, that ministers make themselves ecclesiastical engineers, and are so busy running the machinery of the church that they have no leisure left for anything else. And there are a great many laymen who are so busy studying the enginery by which the church operates, that they take no comfort of the voyage. They are mere engineers' pupils.

I do not undertake to say that churches are of no use. They are of a great deal of use. They are means of conveyance to heaven. They are instruments of education. But they are not divine, in any other sense than that in which things that are man-made are divine. Not a church on earth—not the Greek Church, nor the Roman Church, nor any one of the Protestant Churches—is any more divine than civil governments are. God has not anywhere written down what he wants, and called it *republicanism*, or *monarchy*, or *aristocracy*. He made men so that they must live together in society; and that necessity involves the growing out of it of some sort of government. And we have at last come to a knowledge of the fact that what the form of that government shall be is a matter of experiment. And we scoff at the idea of a *jure divino* government. Whether it be a government with a crown or a ballot-box, we say that it is a human device just as much as husbandry is, and just as much as the mechanic arts are, which have their foundation and necessity in nature, and are unfolded by the ordinary processes of investigation and thought. And so it is with the church, and all the ordinances of the church. There is not an ordinance that a man may not neglect, and yet go to heaven; and there is not an ordinance that a man may not observe, and yet, in spite of it, fail to get to heaven. A man may be a Catholic, and kiss the Pope's toe from the day of his birth to the day of his death, and not go to heaven. A man may be a Friend Quaker, and eschew all external forms and ceremonies, and yet be a good Christian, and get to heaven. Our salvation does not stand in the kind of school-house that we are in.

I went to a school (heaven help the mark!) in a little brown school-house, that smelled of wasps and boys, and I sat there through the weary day, and did not learn much; but there were other scholars that did. That school-house was nothing to me; but shall I take my individual experience and rail at the common-school which some profited by, though I did not?

All churches are good churches to those to whom they are good, and all churches are poor churches to those to whom they are poor. Turn your ox into a clover-field, and will it not get food? Turn your canary-bird into the same clover-field, and will he get food? Different kinds of creatures require different kinds of feeding. There is truth in the saying that "what is one man's food is another man's poison." Emotive and poetic natures require one sort of organization. Orderly and methodical natures require another sort of organization. Some men that are freer and wilder than others, will not take on a restraining organization. Let every man have that liberty which belongs to him. Only, here is the ideal of Christian development; and whether you get it in the church, or over the church, or under the church, or out of the church, get it. If the church can help you, take it; and if it cannot help you, do not take it. And do not sit down and grumble, but find some other way. If the church is the best aid, take that, not because it is perfect, but because it is better than anything else; but if there is anything better than the church, take that. Avail yourself of whatever will best promote the development of your soul into love and peace and power through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Men who are seeking this ideal development of Christian character by morality, by general good works, by a daily faithful use of the knowledge which they have, may be Christians, although they are not the highest style of Christians. They may be Christians, although they come far short of this ideal Christian character which is laid down as the mark and as the criterian in the New Testament. Men are not so much to distress themselves about whether they are Christians or not, as simply to ask themselves, "At what point in the progress am I? How far have I got along?" The New Testament recognizes the fact that there is a wide diversity in the phenomena of individual Christian life. The apostle declared that all were not able to receive the truth. And Christ said to his disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you are not able to receive them." I perceive many doctrines which are called orthodox, and which in a measure or in a manner are rejected of men whom I believe to be Christians. The nature of these men's minds is such that they are not able to receive those doctrines. The mode of statement is not yet sufficiently generic to take in all forms of truth. The same truth can take on a multitude of different forms.

Take any one great truth; as, for instance, the truth of the natural character of man, as low and sinful. The commanding fact is this: that every living being on earth is sinful to such a degree that he needs the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost; that he needs the divine touch and stimulating influence from the beginning to the end of his

life, to bring him up to true manhood. No man reaches his final disclosure by any power that is in himself, or any power that is in the natural world, or any power of education, or the power of any social influence of society. Every man must come to his true and higher manhood by the power of God in the soul. And every man is depraved to the degree in which he needs that power.

Men may receive in one age one philosophy, or one exposition of the truth, in another age another exposition of truth, and in another another; but the essential point of unity is there, though the man may be so rude or cynical that the regenerating power of the spirit of God never can come to his true nature. And men may vary endlessly and infinitely in their exposition of the truth, or in their power of accepting this or that way of presenting the truth, and yet be Christians. And so I think that many persons in churches who are called heretical are Christians. Though they cannot accept doctrinal statements of Christian truth, they do in the main accept that grand ideal of which Christ was the only embodiment, and which he more perfectly presents than it was ever presented before. And they are following after Christ. Aud it is doing that which constitutes them Christians—not Christians on the best model, it may be; but Christians that are on their way toward perfection. They are of those of whom the apostle says, "They shall be saved so as by fire." Nevertheless, they are in the train, and are on the road, and by the grace of God shall yet see eternal life.

The Christian attainment in this life will vary in one and another. Some seem to grow but little, and some seem to grow very much. There are infinite degrees of variation in the actual attainments of men in this world, partly from the forces which they inherit, partly from the education which they receive, and partly from circumstances which help one and hinder another. A hundred things there are which vary the successful application of man's purposes to the great end of spiritual life. But every man that knows in his own soul that the thing which he wants and is aiming at and seeking is a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus—him I call a Christian—a follower of Christ.

We must, therefore, make our definitions larger and more charitable. We must make our terms of admission to Christian communion larger and more charitable. We must, above all things, explode, first or last, the idea that man-made institutions can be so constructed, justly and rightfully, in the sight of God, as to exclude those whom Christ himself personally receives, and whose life gives evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. No church on earth can stand when God looks upon it and sees that there are many that are not permitted to come into it, not because they are not followers of Christ, but because they do not know how to accept the interpretations and con-

structions which some men put upon the great problems of divine truth.

A man need not, therefore, despair because he is not orthodox. A man need not despair because he is not a Christian as he sees that other people are Christians. I would preach a catholicity as broad as the heart of my Master. I hold up this great conception of divine life in the soul—this fact that, by the power of God, it is possible for us to have a spiritual life that shall lift us easily into the precinct and presence and communion of God; so that the influence which comes upon our soul, from day to day, reflected from the sky, reflected from the earth, reflected from living things, reflected from business and society, shall still be the influence of the divine power.

I believe that under that soul guidance and inspiration, if we will only yield to it and be led by it, there is, connected with this royalty of love-life with God the profoundest harmony and peace in our own selves. The torment of the battle between the upper and the lower life in man ceases or may cease. Of all battles, there are none like the unrecorded battles of the soul. Without banners spread or trumpets sounded, with no visible conflict and clash of arms, God and angels know that the fiercest battles and bitterest strifes of the universe are those which are waged in the secret places of men's souls, where the earthly, sensual and beastly elements of human nature are in conflict with that which is pure and sweet and spiritual in them. These are the battles that God registers, which are going on in men, and which, blessed be God, issue, or may issue, in the "peace which passeth all understanding," in that land where love, and conscience, and faith and hope appear, chanting the song of victory, and wearing upon their heads the laurel wreath, and where selfishness and pride and passion are humbled to become the servants of the soul, and no longer to be its despots and masters.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be." You and I probably shall not reach this attainment in the present life. But there are some, I think, who come very near to it. When I read the lives of saints in the old Roman church; when I read the life of Eugénie de Guérin; when I read of the Madam Guyons; when I read of one and another in the Protestant Saints' Calendar, that seem to have lifted themselves up, or to have been lifted up, above the perturbations of this lower atmosphere, and to have lived in perpetual joy, I do not feel inclined to doubt that there are some who do reach that state. I am disposed to think that it is not simply a final condition into which we are to come at last, but that it is a normal condition, and one into which we may come, and in which we may abide, in this life. So that when I see in a soul great goodness, and great benignity, and great peace, and great joy, and a state of foreelooking toward its heritage, I do not say within

myself, "This is something unnatural." I do not say, "His appetites and passions have burned out and left only his higher manhood." I do not say, "This is the quiet of autumnal decadence in him." No, that is the direction of true human growth, toward joy, and peace and power.

I go further, and say that I do not doubt that there was revealed in the apostles a miraculous power. Nor do I doubt that there have been ages since the time of the apostles in which there have been here and there single natures that were ordained nobly, and, by education, or in the divine providence, brought into such conditions that they reached the altitudes of this higher disclosure, and had power such as does not belong to ordinary mortals. I do not doubt that there may be some persons who are able to break through into that power yet. And I believe the time may come in which the race will have reached that stage of development in which it will be found that there is power in the soul of a man to use natural laws in ways that are now misunderstood, and that we call miraculous. I believe that this is among the ultimate disclosures of Christianity in the individual soul.

But it is not for you nor for me, probably. I am one of the lingerers. I reach so far up that I can begin to see what they are doing above me. You reach in the same direction. And yet, though I have some faint conception of the reality of that state, it doth not yet appear to me what I shall be. But I know that when he shall appear I shall be like him. For I shall see him as he is. This I know: that my life is hid, now, with Christ in God; and that when he shall appear, I shall also appear with him. I shall never know myself, I shall never make my true appearance, until I stand enfranchised and rejoice in the glory of God in the other world. Then I shall reach all that I have dreamed of, and aspired to, and striven after, and fought for—and not till then.

Between this and that, battle, night and day, turbulent elements unbalanced forces; but then, my own better self, my educated self, all that in me which is unfolded and brought into symmetry—the qualities which have been developed under the training of the schoolmaster Jesus, who has shone out upon me and made me what I am—these are tending to draw me upward and onward toward my heavenly home.

In Jesus, the First and the Last; the Alpha and Omega; the soul's Nurse; the soul's Mother; the soul's Saviour; the Providence and the Grace; the all in this world that we can know of God—in him the Father dwells, and he in the Father; so that they who have seen Jesus have seen the Father also. Him I shall see in the magnitude and in the glory of the then revealed beauty of the Godhead. And I shall be like him, as the miniature is like the full size; and I shall be satisfied.

When the tide has been coming in, I have often seen how it chafed and fretted, running into some narrow-mouthed bay, filling it, swirling round, and lapping up on the shores, till by-and-by, still flowing, and flowing, and flowing, it filled the bay full,—the tide had spent itself, there ran a smoothing ripple all over the surface, and the whole bay at last was at rest. And so the soul, while yet it is being filled, is disturbed by ripples and eddies; but by-and-by, when it shall have been filled full of the power and presence of God, it will be satisfied, and will be perfectly at peace, and will be full of joy; and singing forever and forever shall be its sweet employment in heaven. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and the old dark, mourning world we shall remember as children in manhood remember the moment's shower of their youth that broke up their pleasure-party. All the sufferings that we have experienced while getting our education, will, when we shall once have come to our perfect manhood in Christ Jesus, seem to us only as dreams. And the price that we shall have paid will seem as nothing, and less than nothing, in comparison with the exceeding glory of that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Go on, dear brethren. Many of you are nearer home than you think. A step more, and you shall rest. Many of you, though far away yet, are under a safe convoy. Press forward. Let nothing discourage you. Though your attainments may be small, and though your sins may be many, remember that you are Christ's, not because you are good, but because you are to be developed into goodness by him. Trust him, follow him, that by-and-by you may live with him.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We acknowledge thee, our Father and our Saviour, as the source of life. We draw from thee both light and knowledge and comfort. All sustenance of the soul is of thee. And that which we seem to borrow of one another is but reflected light. We rejoice that thou, the Supreme and the all-filling, art all-satisfying. There is no want that is in us which thou canst not supply. We rejoice that thou hast made us, even in this life, so rich, so strong, lifting us up above all the animal race, and giving to us degrees of power eminent above all these other influences underneath authority. And we rejoice that we have not reached nor attained to the end of being; that above us are ranks and degrees infinite; yea, and that we, too, are rising to take hold of higher attainments; and that, in nobler circumstances, and in perfected being, we are to be sons of God. What that is does not yet appear. We know that it is glorious. We know that it shall fill us with satisfaction. In the midst of toils, under burdens, with darkness hanging about our path, we look, though we know not their full meaning, to these precious promises which make the future so bright, which destroy the fear of dying, and which take sadness away from decay and decline in years. We believe that we were old when we were born, as they that are farthest from their true life; and that we are growing young as we grow old, as those that draw near to themselves indeed. For then alone shall we be what we are to be when we shall have reached thy presence in the heavenly land.

And now we rejoice that years are bringing, with the waste of worldly things, the creation, the revelation, and the full joy and forctaste of those better possessions, those nobler experiences, from reformed, and purified, and exalted faculties, which thou shalt give to all that are with thee in the heavenly land. Fill us with this sacred thought, and the intimations of our coming state, so that we may, even in this world, learn, under burdens and under discouragements, yet to be cheerful, yet to maintain our faith and our hold upon duty, and not to count meanly of ourselves, nor throw away our chances of immortality. And grant, we pray thee, that all those who are in twilight seeking dimly to live aright, may have a clearer understanding of the divine plan in human life.

We pray that all those who are waging battle against their own passions and easily besetting sins may have thy presence, and the inspiration of thy Spirit; that they may never lay down their arms till they are victorious over every thought and feeling, and have brought every one into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that thou wilt make us hate selfishness in all its forms. Grant that more and more we may see what beauty there is in kindness and love, both toward God and toward men. And may that be the kingdom where we shall desire to reign, and in which we shall strive to attain degrees of excellence and of honor. And, while other men rage and contest for the things which perish in the using, may we seek to lay up treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. We pray that thou wilt look upon all those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, to whom thou hast made the gracious promise that they shall be filled. Grant that they may have soul-satisfaction, perfect rest, in thee. Thou hast promised peace, not as the world gives, but divine and celestial peace. Grant that there may be many to whom this promise shall be fulfilled. Great peace may they have that love thy law, and that love thee and thy cause. And we pray that thou wilt fill thy people with holy zeal, not alone for themselves, but for the upbuilding of thine outward kingdom in this world. May the number of those that live by faith be multiplied. May the number of those whose power is in love be increased. May all who love thee sincerely learn to love one another. And we pray that there may grow up this heart-unity by which,

little by little, outward dissensions shall be absorbed, and things needful shall be made harmless.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt bless thy cause under every form. May justice prevail. May truth assert its right. May men yield allegiance to thee under all forms of goodness. May they see the God that incarnates himself in the ways of men, and follow after every step of rectitude, and righteousness, and purity and gentleness, and mercy and love.

And we pray that thou wilt be near to all that are in trouble, and succor them, or teach them the mystery of suffering, and all its benefit. Grant that any who are sorrowing under bereavements, while they acknowledge thine hand reverently, may partake somewhat of the joy that yet shall be revealed in them when suffering shall have had its perfect work. And be near to give light to any that are in darkness and perplexity; to any that are in doubts and fears at every step; to any that are under the bondage of conscience. May their tyrant relax his hold, and give them that peace which love brings, and conscience cannot.

And we pray thee, O Lord, our God! that thou wilt draw near to all that are in poverty, and are struggling therewith. May they have the power given them by which they shall see above the visible and the present, and live more and more in the glories of thy coming deliverance.

We beseech of thee that all classes and conditions of men may come up before thee, and may receive thy divine benediction.

Bless the churches that are gathered together in these great cities, and all thy servants that to day shall preach the Gospel. And may they be able to preach with power from on high. And may they see the word prospering in their hands, and the cause of God growing.

We pray that wars may cease, and that the occasions of war may perish. And we beseech of thee that ignorance may flee away, and superstition therewith; and that all the earth may see the salvation of our God.

We ask these things for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant the light of consolation, and joy, and comfort, to all those thy followers that are seeking, through the twilight and through the darkness, to find thee. How great is that darkness to some! How many are there that say, "All thy waves have gone over me. All my passions sweep headlong, terrific, uncontrolled and uncontrollable. My God! my God! dost thou care for me?" Thou dost care for the poor and struggling soul. Thou dost understand how hard the conflict is with those that are under the dominion of passion; that have been perverted by bad education; that are biased and drawn away by sympathies of evil people round about them; that are, by sickness and poverty, and ten thousand grating influences of life, made wretched. Thou art sorry for them; and though sin is in them, and thou canst not bear that they should be sinners, yet thou dost love them; and thou art waiting for them; and thou art patient; and thou art sending them sweet angelic influences; and if they will, thou wilt bring them out of bondage, and thou wilt carry them through the desert, and they shall even see the promised land. Great is the power of thy grace over against our weakness and want.

We beseech of thee, if there are those in thy presence who desire to live aright, but stand still thinking that they will wait till they know better what to do, that they may hear thy voice saying to them, If any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine which I preach.

Grant, O Lord, that every one may be active in the cause of God, casting off evil, reaching out to perfect communion with thee, to the joy of a controlling love, and to that peace which passeth all understanding.

Grant that every one may live, not for time, not for money, not for pleasure, not for ambition, not even for friendship, but for self in God. And may every one see in God the grand aim of his life, and feel the drawing of thine heart. May we be everlastingly homesick till we get home. And we beseech of thee that we may be near to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and who are seeking every day to fulfill thy will, and yet are conscious that they walk in shaded places, and for whose feet there are no mountain tops, nor land of Beulah, nor out-look of blissful foresight. Grant that still they may labor in the appointed places, and according to the divine will, and wait for the revelation of Jesus Christ in them in the world to come.

It is not long. They are seeds yet, but are soon to sprout and grow, and shall grow in a fairer clime and a better soil. And grant, we pray thee, that those who stand very near to thee may listen if peradventure they yet may bear the harp and the sound of the heavenly band.

Oh! how many are there there whom we would hear again! Our arms reach out that have been emptied. Our heart longs to feel again the head that once covered it. We wait for those that are dear to us as our life. They are gone, and the places that knew them shall know them no more forever. Blessed spirits! we are coming to thee, and are not far away. Come to the battlement, and cry out to us. Come, come that the Spirit and the Bride in your voices may invite us thither. Lord Jesus we are coming to thee, poor, spent, discouraged, sinful, to be born again, and again, and again, until we may grow up into thee in all things. Do not despise us. Be very gentle to us. Put thine arms about us, that we may be carried in the bosom of thy love into our Father's kingdom. And there will we praise the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, forever more. *Amen.*

OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."—Isa., LVIII., 13, 14.

Every house of any consideration has in it a best room. It is usually the largest in the house, and the most comely. It usually is furnished with the choicest things which the owner can afford, and represents the best outward estate of his household. Here is the best carpet. Here are the best colors. Here is the best furniture. Here are hung the best pictures. Here are the chairs burnished and covered. And here, it may be, is the sofa, luxurious with extra springs. The few choice treasures are put upon the mantel-piece, or on some corner shelf. Whatever there is that stands apart from common uses by being a little better, the parlor receives. And this room is scrupulously kept—too scrupulously, often. All festive occasions are celebrated in it. It is the room of honor. It is here that we devote ourselves to our company when we would show them hospitality. It stands in the house as a perpetual reminder of beauty—what little beauty we can command; of hospitality—so much as we are able to exercise of it; of superiority. A best room is not simply an emblem of vanity, as cynics would say. To have a room which has in it choice things, is rather the unconscious inspiration of ideality; it is a desire to maintain it in the household; and it is a silent but real influence for refinement and for higher living.

It is a sad thing to see a person or a family that makes one day just like another; that does not care to make one day better than any of the others; that regards all things as good enough. On a low level, it is a moral influence that leads one to desire to dress better on some occasions than on others, and to spread a better table on some occasions than on others. Although I should not dignify such efforts as these by calling them *religious*, I do say that they are minor forms of the in-

Sunday Morning, May 29, 1870. Lesson: Isa. LVIII. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 52, 365, 30.

spiration of moral feeling, and indicate the disposition that is so necessary to humanity—the disposition to go up; to leave lower forms in favor of higher developments, both in material things, in social elements, in intellectual progress, and in moral estate. It is aspiration in one of its lower forms.

Now, what the parlor is to the house, the Jewish Sabbath and its substitute, the Christian's Lord's Day, were meant to be to the week. The week is a house, and Sunday is the best room in it, and it ought to have the best things put into it, and it ought to be kept religiously; and it is to exercise upon all our time just the same unconscious influence, or conscious influence, as the case may be, which a well-prepared and well-kept parlor does invariably exercise upon all the occupants of the house. Every week was to have its parlor-day. It was to be a day that should be looked up to by the young and by the old as the best day of the week. In other words, it was to be a delight. It was to be honorable; and so, memorable. In the passage which I have read to you, Isaiah declares that if men, in their observance of the Lord's Day, will lay aside their common doings, and their lower pleasures and worldly occupations, and so give themselves to the Sabbath as to make it a delight and most honorable, God will not fail to bless them, and their posterity, and their nation.

The Lord's Day is an established thing; and I do not propose, this morning, to examine its history, nor its transmutations, nor the grounds of its authority. I propose simply to illustrate and enforce some points in the matter of its right observance.

What are we to aim to secure on that day? All that part of our life which is exercised through the six days of the week, and taxed by strife, is to have rest on Sunday. Our strife of soul and strife of body, our working thoughts and our working members, are all of them to have that rest which comes from no longer working. This is the lower form of its benefit. We are, on that day, by giving this rest to the lower nature, to give enjoyment and inspiration, and a chance for development, to that part of our nature which is usually overborne during the week by secular affairs, and which ought to have some special time to itself for culture and development. The object of Sunday is to say to that in men which is secular and animal, "Rest;" and to that which is intellectual and moral and social, "Grow." It is a day for the better part of our manhood to thrive in. It is not by implication said that the other part ought not to thrive. It is simply implied that the higher as well as the lower part of our being should be developed. We say that the bone and the muscle must toil; we say that a man must plan and labor and persevere in outward things; but we say, also, that while we strive for the necessities of existence in this life,

during six days in the week, it is proper that during the seven days there should be one that should be schoolmaster to the higher nature of man; that should have something to say to his intellect, independent of its relations to thrift and secularity; that should remind him that he is not to live in this world alone, and should lift him up to a higher plane: and that should shed abroad on him such influences as would make him happier in his higher manhood than he ordinarily is in his lower and secular manhood. The Lord's day is a day for social, moral and intellectual development toward a nobler manhood than the world can inspire during the other six days of the week.

How are we, then, to observe the Sabbath so as to gain these advantages? It should be so done that the result should be enjoyable, and that the day should be regarded as a friendly day. I know it is impossible for one who is wholly vulgar, selfish, unspiritual, to begin to observe the Sabbath and find it other than irksome. In other words, *the natural man understands not the things of the spirit.* A vulgar man cannot be pleased with refinement. A bad man is not happy among good men. Nevertheless, the general effect of the Sabbath Day is not to be burdensome. It is not to be a restricted day. It is not to be a day of seclusion. It is not to be a day in which a man is to afflict his soul. It is to be a day whose impression, on the whole, whose average and general effect (whatever special exceptions may be made temporarily in the progress of education from a lower form to a higher) shall be such on every man that he shall feel that it is a delight, that it is honorable, and that it is memorable. This Sabbath is not that conventional Sabbath, that sectarian Sabbath, that drudging Sunday, which is wearisome; which leaves a man less of himself than he had before; which puts him under yoke and in chains; and which makes him sigh when he wakes up, and say, "Oh! it is Sunday morning, as sure as I live,"—and the pleasantest feature of which is the going down of the sun. That way of observing Sunday is not divine; is not Christian; is not scriptural; is not religious.

We are to bear this in mind as the characteristic circumstance, that whatever you do, and whatever you avoid, in your observance of the Sabbath (or the *Lord's Day*, which is the more appropriate term. Neither *Sunday* nor *Sabbath* is as good as *Lord's Day* for our use—though you may use either or all of them without any superstition, or any fear but that the Lord will know what you mean, if you know)—whatever you do, and whatever you avoid, in your observance of this day, it is to be characterized by pleasantness. It is to be made pleasant, not by low pleasures, not by carnal pleasures, not by self-indulgence, not by gluttony, not by the lower forms of conviviality, but by the development of superior manhood, and of Christian joys. And

when I say *Christian joys*, I mean manhood joys. For Christ is the one great typical Man; and all high manhood necessarily conforms to Christ.

This day, then, is to be the one day of the week which is to act upon our higher nature exclusively, and which is to make us men. It is the Lord's Day; but it is no more his day than it is *Manhood's* day. It should therefore carry in its habits, in its demands, in its fulfillments, in its associations, this feeling of joyfulness in a redeemed and a higher way of living. And if a man once gets the idea in his mind that the Sabbath is a day to let forth the better part of his nature, and that his higher feelings are to be so excited and brought out that the day, on the whole, shall become more and more a delightful and happy day to him; then he has a principle in his nature that is better than any special rules. He has a principle that will determine what he may do or what he may not do. The whole observance of the Sabbath Day is but a practical and experimental method of carrying out this principle. It is so employing the day that one's higher manhood shall pronounce it a joyful day—a day delightful and honorable.

As a workman would refuse to carry any part of his shop into the parlor where company was invited; as, when that sanctuary of the house was opened, the wife would rebuke the stupid shoemaker who should bring in the shoe that he was making, and his last, and his hammer, and his awls, and his waxed-ends, when company was there, and would bundle him out into his shop, if he must needs do such work; as the cooper would never entertain company while working at his barrel, behind the door, or in the corner; as the carpenter would not permit himself to bring his planks, and planes, and saws, and shavings and litter into the parlor; as the parlor in the family is kept for higher uses, and these lower uses are kept out of it; so it is to be with the Sabbath Day. It is to be so respected and esteemed that all common occupations shall be kept out of it. Keep your secular work and tools and dirt and manufacturing industries out of Sunday. It is the company-day. It is the Lord's Day. It is our higher manhood's day. And let us forget on that day those necessary uses to which we are subject during the other six days of the week, that we may give a chance to that most difficult part of ourselves to cultivate, that which lives by feeding on the invisible kingdom of God. It is not, then, to be a working day.

I am not superstitious on this subject. If a man is walking in his garden on Sunday morning, and sees a weed or two that had before escaped his notice, and he stoops down and plucks those weeds up, I do not think he need turn around to see if anybody is looking at him. I do not think a man will be condemned for a thing like that. I am

not so superstitious as to think that a man commits a heinous offence if he works a bit on Sunday. It would have been regarded so in the old Jewish times, because cessation from work was a distinctive peculiarity among the Jews. With them the Sabbath was not a religious day. It was not a day for public worship. Even in the earlier periods of the Jewish economy it was absolutely and simply a day in which they should not work. They might talk, and laugh, and feast, and assemble for social festivity, but they must not work, on that day. It is not so with the Lord's day. And yet, that is not a working day, and ought not to be a working day. You destroy the very characteristic of it if you make it a working day. It is meant to be the one day in which a man shall feel, "I am not a toiler; I am not a worker; I am not an underling; I am not an apprentice, nor a journeyman; I am not a man on wages; I am not a hired man; I am a *man*. And this day is my own day. I have no taskmaster or overseer to-day. I am my own. I belong to my wife, to my children, and to my neighbors, in my high and generous nature. We are all each other's. This is God's day, and therefore it is mine. And my head goes up as high as it can reach. I am not to crouch to-day. I am to walk as free as the freest. I am to be as independent as the most independent." For the hand of the Lord has once in every seven days marked out a place, twenty-four hours across from one side to the other, in which every man stands like every other man. All distinctions are gone on that day, and every man stands simply in his manhood, and is as good as other people—if he *is* as good; not otherwise.

Therefore, when I say that Sunday ought not to be a working day, I say it, not because I feel that we are to be superstitious in respect to single acts of labor on that day, a little more or a little less, but because I perceive that if we undertake to drag work into it, we cannot set it apart from all other days distinctively, and make it that honorable day, with badges of freedom on it, which it was designed to be. As the parlor is degraded if you drag stable work or shop-work into it, so the Lord's Day is degraded if you make it a day of toil.

The Lord is not profited by it, one way or the other. The angels are in no way profited by it. They do not care, so far as they themselves are concerned. It is your day, or anybody else's day who is interested in it. And who should not be interested in it? Who is so much interested in taking care of a house, to see that the chimney does not smoke, that the roof does not leak, that the windows are not broken, that the partitions are sound, and that the house is full of comfort, as the man that lives in it, and owns it? Now, the Sabbath is your day. It is every man's day—especially every man's who wants to be stronger, higher, purer, nobler than he has been, or is. It is a day

made on purpose to elevate men. It is not a day designed to enable the church to get a hitch on folks. It is not a day on which ecclesiastical authorities are to watch men with jealousy. It is the common people's great liberty-day; and they are bound to see to it that work does not come into it. Not because work is dishonorable, nor because there is a special stigma to be attached to working on Sunday, but because they cannot make it what it ought to be for them if they do suffer work to come into it. Work is to be kept out of Sunday because it does not belong there.

There is no better rule on this subject, I think, than the old one, that works of necessity and mercy are permissible on the Sabbath, and no others; that whatever work is necessary for the real comfort and sustenance of the household, and for the relief of persons that are really suffering, may be performed on Sunday, and that all other work is out of place on that day.

I shall not go into a hundred questions which will arise—particularly such as those which relate to times of war, or sudden emergencies of industry. Now and then in war, the Sabbath has to give way for the time being; but the exigency must be special and temporary to justify it. Everybody ought to feel interested in not finding occasions to work on Sunday. Everybody should feel about Sunday as he feels about his parlor. A man does not go round with a pitchfork full of hay or manure, and look wistfully through the window of his parlor, and say, "Why cannot I just throw it in there for a little while?" He does not want to throw it in there. He is proud of his parlor, and does not want to desecrate it. And working men ought not to go round saying, "Cannot I have a little time for work on Sunday morning? Cannot I pinch off a half hour for work on Sunday night? May I not get in that hay that is out, and is liable to get wet?" I have noticed that when farmers had made up their mind that it was right to get in a crop on Sunday if it was likely to suffer, they would always manage to have crops out on Saturday; and I have noticed that when a man says, "I will suffer my whole harvest to perish before I will put one single head of wheat in on Sunday," he never leaves anything out on Saturday that would be damaged if it should rain on Sunday. And it is every man's interest, as I shall show before I get through—and the working-man's interest, more than anybody's else—not only to make this day a day of lordly, noble rest, instead of finding every possible excuse for cheating it, but to keep it clear of toil and work. Every man not only ought to make the Sabbath a day of rest, but he ought to arrange his affairs during the week so that there shall seldom, if ever, be any necessity for work on that day. And thus the influence of Sunday should be to cultivate habits of prudence and self-denial.

By the same rule, the Sabbath is not to be a day of locomotion and travel—certainly not in the way of pleasure. I do not think the Lord's Day is broken in spirit, or that anything is given up, by a man who travels on the Sabbath day, if he has good and sufficient reasons for it; but that absurd maxim, "The better the day the better the deed," applied as it is by many persons, who start on a journey on Saturday in order to gain one day, or by many persons who, when away from home, manage to start so as to be on the road on Sunday in order to save a day, cannot be too strongly condemned. All these little devices by which men rob themselves of Sunday are most unwise.

If Sunday were a day to be dreaded, if it were a prison that you wanted to escape from, and you could, by some device of this sort, get clear of it, you might resort to such expedients with propriety; but what kind of a Sunday have you had, that you want to get out of it? What associations have you had with the Lord's Day, that it should seem desirable to you to go where there is no bell that calls you; where there is no assembly that draws you; where there is no household? How is it that to you the Lord's Day is not more radiant than any other day of the week? What kind of a home has Christianity built for you, if on Sunday you want to be away from it? It ought to be a day when every child is homesick for home. It ought to be a day on which, of all others, men shall say, "Oh, wretched me! that there should be such a misarrangement of things that I must be on the sea on the Lord's day, when I fain would be in the Lord's house." Sunday should be filled with such sweet occupations, and there should be in it so much liberty and joy, shaken down from the tree of life, that all through one's experience he should feel, "Of all the days of the week, Sunday for me!"

I shall have occasion to criticise the ways in which Christian parents bring up their children in this matter, a little further on.

I am not superstitious in regard to traveling on Sunday, any more than I am in regard to working on Sunday. I do not think that God will strike a man with lightning because he travels two or three hours Sunday morning. Above all, I ridicule, as being more pharisaic than they were who lived two thousand years ago, that man who travels till twelve o'clock on Saturday night, but not one minute longer, because that would be breaking the Sabbath. Are we under principles, or are we under rules? Are we men, or are we children yet? I say, If in the exigencies of providence, a man is forced to do some traveling on the Sabbath Day, let him hold his head up, and not go around through some lane or back road. Let him go straight along the thoroughfare, and act as though he knew the day, and loved it as much as anybody

else. And yet, it is every man's interest that there shall be as little rumbling of carriages, and as little of the thunder of cars, on the Sabbath, as possible; and that men shall, as far as possible, arrange their affairs so as not to be caught traveling on that day. Why should you want to make your parlor a highway? Would you like to have a stage driven through your house? Would you like to have a procession sweep through your choicest apartment? Sunday is your rest-room, your guest-chamber, your sweet and blessed sanctuary; and why should you want to break it up, or unfit it for its legitimate use? It ought to be a delight, and not a thoroughfare or barn for horses to tramp in.

It is not, either, to be a visiting day, in any such sense as shall identify it with other days. For you will observe that all the way through I am trying to carry out this idea that Sunday is to be a day set apart from all others, so that people shall feel that it is better, higher and nobler than ordinary days. Now, visiting is right on Sunday. There may be circumstances in which that is the best use to make of the day. But I put it to your conscience—for there are no rules that men cannot go around, or yet get through, just as there are no fences that unruly cattle cannot jump over or break down. And if you want to spoil your Sunday, if you are bound to make an unprofitable day of it, you need not take much pains. You can do it, in spite of all the preaching or other moral influences that can be brought to bear to make it what it should be. And if you want to make it a beautiful day, you can do that. So that, in the matter of visiting, the question is not, "May I, or may I not, visit on Sunday?" The question is, "What sort of visiting will make this day elect and precious? What kind of communion with my fellows will make this day most pleasant and profitable?" We should avoid such visiting as will take away sanctity and beauty from the Sabbath. And yet there is Sunday visiting which is not improper. For instance, it is often the case that we may open our house as a sanctuary, especially in circumstances where persons come to the house of God and need hospitality. Such visiting is not sinful, either on the part of the one who extends the hospitality, or on the part of the one that accepts it. It is to make one's house indeed a true sanctuary. The Lord's Day is just the day for such uses. To the aged, the weary, the friendless, and those from distant places who seek profit in the sanctuary of the Lord, it is eminently proper for us to extend hospitality on the Sabbath. I have known a minister to go and preach on Sunday in some new and distant parish, where there was such delicacy of conscience and such scrupulosity about visiting, or inviting visitors, that he saw every man, woman, and child pass out at the door, and repair to their various

homes, and leave him to go without any dinner. Nobody so much as asked him to go in and break bread. This is being over-scrupulous on the subject of visiting. I think that where men need hospitality, Sunday is the day for it, above all others.

It is also a good day for coming home. It is a good day for children to return to their father's house. Or, if they are so far away that they cannot go home, it is a good day for them to write their letters home. I was not allowed to do it when I was a boy, so strict were the notions of that time; but I bring my children up to do it—and on the ground that home is church. It is God's church. Father and mother are priests before all other priests on this earth. And that which will make my children think of me, and mother, and home, and make them long for home, and make them sweetly homesick, is a means of grace to them, and will do them good. If our children are so near that they can come home, let them come; but if they are so far off that they cannot come home, let them send their love and yearning, and tell us how it fares with them. Make Sunday a home-day. Make it such a day that when your children are at home they would rather be in their father's house than anywhere else, and that when they are away from home they are homesick. Blessed are the homesick! It is a good testimony to father and mother that their children are homesick. You need not be afraid of a child's desecrating the Sabbath when it lifts itself up in his love and memory all his life long. "Ah! that was a precious day when I could get back to the city, and hear my mother read stories out of the Old Testament, and hear my father and my old uncle discuss matters of religion. What a good time I had when I went home on Sunday!" I like to hear children bear this testimony—and all the more because I cannot.

There were too many of us in my father's family. There were eleven children, and the father and mother could not take care of us all. And of course it was the younger ones that had the authority without the communion. The older children, I have no doubt, in this commerce of thought and feeling, had a happy time. My happy time was very much marred by Catechism. There was that sandbar right across the mouth of the family, and I ran upon it every Sunday; and there I stuck! Nobody, I suppose, had the idea that every person in the family ought to be made happy on Sunday. Yes, old Aunt Chandler had. She used to tuck me up in her great lap (she had a lap big enough for a city to couch down on,) and wrap me in her apron, and pat me, and talk to me, in her great round, mellow, good voice, when I had lost my supper because I did not know my Catechism. The fact is, I have never known it from that day to this!

So there is an element of bondage, or restraint, in my memory of

the family. And yet, in spite of all this, that Sunday of my childhood; the marvelous stillness of that day over all Litchfield town hill; that wondrous ringing of the bell; that strange interpretation that my young imagination gave to the crowing of the cock, and to the singing of the birds; that wondering look which I used to have into things; that strange lifting half way up into inspiration, as it were; that sense of the joyful influence that sometimes brooded down like a stormy day, and sometimes opened up like a gala day in summer, on me, made Sunday a more effectually marked day than any other of all my youthful life; and it stands out as clear as crystal until this hour. It might have been made happier and better if there had been a little more adaptation to my disposition and my wants; but, with all its limitations, I would rather have the other six days of the week weeded out of my memory, than the Sabbath of my childhood. And this is right. Every child ought to be so brought up in the family that when he thinks of home, the first spot on which his thought rests shall be Sunday, as the culminating joy of the household.

While, then, I would not lay down any rigorous rule, nor attempt to hold you to any mechanical notions in the matter of visiting, I would say, The Sabbath Day is to be made special, and separate from all other days; and you are to determine what is best in the matter of visitation on Sunday by a consideration of what will make this day most eminent in its influence upon you and your children, by way of refining you, and lifting you up above the vulgarities of life. If visiting will do it, you have a right to visit. If not, you have no right to visit. For your business is to build up a Sunday, and a good one—one full of sunlight and air, and not full of sordidness and common pleasures and vulgar passions.

It is in the light of this attempt to make the Lord's Day a special day of beauty, and joy, and honor, and delight, that we can perhaps discuss the question that is so much mooted as to walking out, and going on excursions, and seeking amusement on the Sabbath. I am decidedly in favor of walking out on the Lord's Day, with moderation, for a hundred reasons. First, because health seems to require that one should have some exercise in the fresh air; and second, because if one is trained aright, nature is itself a means of grace. The influences of the garden, the orchard and the field, may coöperate with the direct moral instruction which children receive in the household, and powerfully corroborate it. But this is to be guarded. It is not to be a source of temptation. The children are not to be sent by themselves to the fields where they will be tempted more than they are able to bear. If this is done, it is to be done with discretion, and on principle. It is to be done with the idea that every child is, in its own way, not to pull

down Sunday, but to try to lift it up. Children are to understand that whatever they do is to make that day noble, beautiful, salient.

So far as the working classes are concerned, it may be occasionally true that the Lord's Day should be a day to take them out from the murky neighborhood where they live; from the filth, and unventilation, and inconvenience of their surroundings; from the shop, the attic, the cellar. It has been strongly urged that it is wise that there should be excursions down the bay, and up the river; that there should be extra railroad trains; that the lower population of the city should once a week be emptied into the country; that it is a great deal better that they should seek recreation out of the city than that they should stay at home, on Sunday. And if that were the only alternative, I should say so too. But it is not the only alternative. When men say that these excursions are a substitute for religious instruction, I deny it. When it is said that occasionally they may alternate with, or coöperate with, other social means of enjoying the Sabbath Day, I do not feel so much set against them as many are. I do so love the open air; I do so love the country; I see so much of God in it; I have been so much blessed myself by it, that I find it hard to say to any poor working man, "You shall never breathe the mountain-air, nor see the stream, nor hear the singing of birds uncaged and flying free and wide abroad." I, that am put above necessities and wants; I, that can control my time; I, that can go out on Monday and hear all that God says, and see all that God does in the field—have I a right to turn to my brother, who is less fortunate than I am, and use my liberty as a despotism, and say to him, "You shall not hear and see those things." If he says, "I am not my own on Monday, nor Tuesday, nor Wednesday, nor Thursday, nor Friday, nor Saturday; my time is bought and paid for; I am under wage; Sunday is the only day which I have to myself; and if I may not on that day go to the country and breathe the fresh air, and hear the birds, I never can," then I have nothing to say. I take the workingman's side, to a certain extent. But then, stop! Seeing the country and hearing birds is very well; but a man must learn *how* to see and hear them. And that he does not learn by going out with a hundred others, who are rough, uncouth, uninstructed. I take comfort in these things, because I have a Sabbath, a sanctuary, and a closet for prayer. It is the spiritual element that has taught me to see nature in such a way that it is a pleasure and benefit to me. But little enjoyment do they have in taste who have not been educated in their moral sentiments. What they need is more, not less, open air in the country; but first they need the means of interpreting what they see there. And although their attics are bad, and their cellars are dark and unwholesome, you can do the laboring classes no other service half

so great as when, on Sunday, you inspire them with more desire to learn; with more manliness; with more spirituality.

I would rather, a thousand times, see rightly guarded and rightly placed reading-rooms established for working men, where, on Sunday, they would be brought into commerce with books and papers, and with people who could give them instruction, than to send them by cars into the country on Sunday, good as that may be in many respects. What they need, first of all things, is spiritual religious instruction. Manliness, founded on the control of the passions and appetites; morality; virtue; true piety—that is the making of any man. That is the making of communities. Let men have that. Do not sacrifice that for the sake of giving them fresh air in the country. If the two could be blended—if they could have the opportunity of the day in the sanctuary and the opportunity of the day in the country—I think it would be better; though I do not know as that would be practicable.

I am very much opposed, however, to the attempt to maintain Sunday as against the poor. I set my face against the attempt to maintain it for rich folks, and make it a bondage for poor folks. When they wanted to run the cars on Sunday in the city, I would not sign a petition against it. It was urged as a reason why they should not run, that so many men—conductors and drivers—were kept working. That might be regulated better. With some more instruction and some more impulse in the direction of humanity, the managers of our roads could probably so order the time that every man should at least have every other Sunday, and a part of each Sunday. And so a remedy could be largely effected.

But would you sign a petition that no man should ride to church in his coach? How many of you would sign such a petition? I have no doubt that I could take a petition that the running of the cars on Sunday should be stopped, and get many of you to sign it; but if I were to take another petition that no man should ride to church in his coach, I do not believe I could get a man here to sign it—unless he was a very poor man. The poor might sign against the rich man's coach, and the rich, not thinking, perhaps, would sign against the only coach that the poor man can ride in. A man wants to come to Plymouth Church (a good place to come to) from out of town; but he has no way to come except to ride in the common people's coach. Another man wants to go out into the country to attend service at some village church, or to visit his father and mother, or uncle or aunt. I do not say that it is the best thing that could happen; but with the fear of the Lord Jesus Christ before me, I never would put my pen on paper to restrict the privileges of the poor laboring classes while I did not place any restriction upon the privileges of rich folks. When a man drives

a car on Sunday, he, for the sake of accommodating perhaps a hundred or two hundred other persons, loses half a day. When a man drives a coach, he loses half a day for the sake of accommodating five. And nobody seems to think there is any hardship in the latter case, though a great many think there is great hardship in the former case. If a man is so rich that he has horses and a coach, and a driver to bring him to church, people think it all right; but the moment a man is so poor that he cannot come to church unless he rides on a car where a driver and a conductor carry two hundred people, they think it is a desecration of the Sabbath. They urge that it is the Lord's Day, and ought not to be broken. I take the poor man's side, and say that Sunday was not meant to be an oppressive day. It was not meant to be a yoke. It was meant to make the poor man freer. And it is to be so zealously hedged in and kept, that, of all the days of the week it shall be a humane, free day. While I take sides with the poor, and while I seem to many to be lax, I appeal to every working man who hears me, whether Sunday is not needed. It is his necessity. It is not mine, particularly. I can take care of myself, and other men that are prospered in life can take care of themselves. All days of the week, to them, are more or less days of leisure, and are Sundays in some sense. But the working people have no leisure day except Sunday; and they are the ones that must not put their foot upon it to destroy it. They are the ones that must not let it run to carnal pleasure. They are the ones that must not let travel break over it needlessly. They must not, for the sake of a misunderstood liberty, pull it down. It is a bulwark between them and oppression; and oftentimes a bulwark between them and the church.

We fail to keep the Lord's Day when it is not generous enough to take in all the conditions of rich and poor, old and young, refined and coarse, religious and worldly. The Lord's Day is a day of mercy. It is more broken by rigor without sympathy, than it is by mercy with laxity. And it was here that Christ had his conflict. Many have supposed that Christ set his face against Sunday. He did not. He set his face against a perverse use of it. There was a man who had a withered hand, and the Pharisees watched Jesus to see whether he would heal it on the Sabbath day; and no sooner did he see that, than he said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth. And it was restored whole like as the other." Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, and said, "He cannot be of God, for he has broken the Sabbath day." And our Master said to them, "Which of you, having an ox, doth not loose him and lead him away to water? Or who is there among you that, having a sheep that has fallen into a ditch, will not straightway take hold of it and get it

out?" He took them on their own permissions, and said, "You show humanity to a beast; is not a man more than a beast?" He said that to heal a man on Sunday was not to break that day. He declared explicitly—and it is a *Magna Charta*—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Sunday is not something in and of itself so beautiful and sacred that men must be sacrificed for the sake of keeping it. No; manhood is the highest thing in this world. No government is equal in value to manhood. No law is of any value compared with manhood. No custom is of any worth compared with manhood. No institution, no prayer, no song, no sermon, no service, no Sabbath, no anything, can be compared with it for value. Where men are brought up side by side with the institutions and usages which educate them, and one or the other must be sacrificed, save the man and sacrifice the usage, no matter what it is. And so, where a man was to be healed on the Sabbath day, and it would break Sunday according to men's ideas, Christ broke it, not because he thought it a bad day, nor because he thought all days ought to be alike, as some have misreasoned, but because he wanted to teach that Sunday was best kept when it was used to make men better, happier, nobler, freer. The very thing for which Sunday was made was to serve men.

In all our legislation, in all our debates, it is not enough for us to take an old word, a historical term, an ancient argument. We are to look at the way in which men are living to-day. We must take account of what their trials and exigencies are. And in our observance of the Sabbath day we are to bring it into sympathy with all classes and conditions of men. If there is any place where the Sabbath is to be loosened, it is not at the top, but at the bottom. It is not where men are prosperous. It is not where families are largely built. It is not where the household is already like a palace. The Sabbath must be so arranged and kept that the poor, the needy, the scattered, the outlying, the most necessitous, shall have its mercy and compassion. It must be a light shining on their darkness, and a help to save them, or else it is not rightly kept.

A negative observance of the Sabbath is as imperfect a keeping of it as there can well be. And this is a household matter largely. Men and women having children growing up around them want to keep Sunday in the family, but they do not know exactly how to go about it. They simply feel that there are a great many things that they must not do. The prevalent idea of keeping the Sabbath is that it is a day on which certain things must not be done. There are about twenty must-not-do-somethings. It is *not*, *not*, *not*, all the way through. To the majority of people Sunday is a day full of *nots*.

I very well remember my own childhood. I saw something funny,

and burst out laughing. "Henry, you must not laugh." "Why must I not laugh?" "Because it is Sunday." I started to run. "Henry, you must not run; it is Sunday." Something attracted my attention, and, following a natural impulse, I pointed my finger toward it. "Henry, you must not look at such things; it is Sunday." There were a few books in the house that I might read. The Bible was one, the Catechism was another, and there were several other Sunday books. But if I picked up Robinson Crusoe,it was, "Henry, Henry, you must not read that to-day." That eternal *must not, must not, must not,* followed me everywhere. I was jubilant, emotive, high-spirited; and I was perpetually being pruned. I was cut down here and there. This branch was cut off, and that blossom was cut off. They cut off my head, my feet and my hands. And I would fly sometimes like an insect, without legs or wings; and then I would wonder why they did not do something else to me! Sunday was a day of restriction to me. I was tied up. Now, I do not say that children ought not to be restrained. They ought to be. But where you are restraining children, you must look out that you do not lose the thing in them for which you are restraining them. You must see to it that they do not lose respect for the Sabbath through the feeling that it is a prison-house instead of a delight.

"Take care, my child; grandpa will be disturbed." "Be careful, my son; you know auntie cannot bear a noise." The child is all the time sacrificed for everybody else. He is sacrificed for 'pa', for 'ma', for 'grandpa', and for the aunt that has a nervous headache. He is cuffed here and there, and told that he must not do this and that. He cannot go where he wants to go; he cannot do what he wants to do; he cannot see what he wants to see. He is like a punctuation point in a printer's case. He is merely put in to keep sentences and parts of sentences apart. He is neither a sentence, nor a word, nor a letter. He is nothing for himself, in all the early part of his life. And he grows up with a dislike for the Sabbath. He is so peppered and salted with the feeling that it is a day of bondage, that he wishes it would not come more than once a month, and that it would skip at that.

I remember being with my brother Charles by the window in the great west sitting room, one Sunday afternoon. We sat watching the sun. There was a hazy horizon so that we could look right at the great round, good-natured face of the sun. We could see it steadily going down; and I could not restrain my exultation; and I said, "Oh, Charles! it is most down!" Mother (good woman as ever lived) sat by us, and said, "Boys! boys! you ought not to be glad that Sunday is over." I knew I ought not, and my conscience began to condemn me. "You ought to wish that the Sunday might be longer." "Yes, ma'a'm."

And yet, if ever a boy was glad, I was when the sun did get down. I would say, "Yes, ma'a'm" in the right spot, and "No, ma'a'm," but, after all, there was my boy nature. The Sunday had not made me in love with it. Could it be made attractive to me? Yes, very easily. When dear old Aunt Esther had charge of the house, she used to say, in the morning, "Now, boys, if you will keep quiet all this morning, and will do such and such things, as quick as we get back from church I will read to you, and I will read to you all the afternoon, out of the Bible." "Will you read the *Ten Plagues?*" "Yes, the Ten Plagues, and everything else you want to hear." On that promise all day went right. And no sooner were we gathered in the nursery than she sat us about her on our little footstools, and put on her spectacles, and took the Bible; and we heard her read "Joseph" and the "Ten Plagues," and the beautiful story of Ruth. And a Sunday spent in this way was never lonesome. Old Aunt Esther knew how to check and how to humor us; she knew when to let us out, and when to harness us; she was sympathetic and kind; and she made the Sabbath a beautiful day to us. And really, I felt like being a little boy of a Christian on Sunday when I used to be under Aunt Esther's discipline.

Every father and mother that is ordained as the priest of God's church in the household, is not simply bound to see that the children do not play on Sunday. Your duty only begins at that point. Your business is to build up a Sunday that shall be a delight to your children. And I put it to you, my friend—deacon, class-leader, Christian of forty years standing—do your children like Sunday? If not, what a testimony is it! If on the contrary you have brought up your family so that they like Sunday; if you have said to your wife and them, "How shall we make this day honorable in the sight of God?" and you have made it thus honorable, and a pleasure and a benefit to yourselves; then what a different testimony is that! Have you brought up your family so that they enjoy the Sabbath day? What do your children say about it? Would you like to have me question them on the subject? If you have not so used Sunday, then you have broken it.

We ought also to remember that on the Lord's Day, so far as the services of the community are concerned, they are to be conducted with reference to the average wants of the people in that community, and are not to be oppressive to them.

And there should be the largest liberty in things right and proper. I have no sympathy with the idea that persons must not talk when going to and from church. I say to people, Talk with each other when you are coming to church. Show that you are not ice nor lead. Be men. Do not be afraid to ask after each other's welfare, and after the

welfare of each other's households. Do not talk business; and yet, do not be ashamed to say, "How are you progressing in the world?" You are God's freemen, and not the church's bondmen. It is a thousand times better for you to show feelings of sympathy and humanity and real interest for each other in these ways, than not to show any such feelings. And when you get to the door of the church, do not stop as though you were going into a sepulcher, and take off your hat, and come in with a long sigh; but, with a cheerful face, walk up the aisle and take your place. Ah! if your God is a crowned despot, you may well be terrified in his presence; but my dear God is my Father, my Lover, my Friend. He is the most familiar, the most sympathetic, the most genial, the most joyous of all Beings. What there is of lightness and of sweetness in the sunrise; what there is of sympathy and gladness in the heaven and on the earth, is the outflow of his great nature. He is the God of all joy and of all consolation. What he wants, I know by the way he has made my father and mother, and my brothers and sisters. I take counsel of that which is best of what he has put into me. I come into the house of God to rejoice. David could have taught us many better things in the lore of the sanctuary than we have learned where asceticism is made law, and where men go into church stiff and solemn, and set themselves down in their sepulchral pews, and do not look about them, nor speak to any one. I say, Talk, remembering that your conversation is to be the chastened and noble conversation of men who are together striving to make this one day higher, better, brighter, sweeter, nobler, than all the other days of the week. And when the services of the house of God are over, and the congregation are dismissed, I would not have you go still out into the street and back to your houses. I like to see men get up in church and shake hands over the back of the pew, and speak to each other in the aisles. Let your feelings manifest themselves through lip and eye and hand. This, while it is a more joyful, is not a less elevated observance of the Sabbath Day. And it will be far more likely to be observed by the common people, and especially by the poor and needy, if we make it a delight, than if we make it a day that is stiff to ourselves and stupid to them.

I may just say, in passing, that they likewise fail to keep the Lord's Day who tax themselves excessively in works of kindness. I mean superintendents and teachers of Sunday-schools, and teachers of Bible classes, and many others who serve in religious things on Sunday. If the work of the Church could be properly distributed, there would be only a little for each one to do; but usually the majority do nothing, and those who are willing to work do more than they ought to. I have known persons who arose early in the morning, and went to Sabbath-

school in the forenoon, and then went to church, and then went to another Sabbath-school in the afternoon, and then went to a prayer-meeting after that, and went to evening services after that, and then went to bed. And that is breaking Sunday, I do not care who does it. It is making it, instead of a day of rest, the day of the severest labor of the whole week. And as a general thing persons are not justified in over-taxing themselves in such ways. I think that ministers break the Sabbath and impair their usefulness by over-exerting themselves. There may be emergencies in which a man is called to preach three or four times on a Sunday. Many would suppose that one was peculiarly apostolic who did so; but, ordinarily speaking, emergencies out of the way, a minister should not preach more than twice in a single day—and I am inclined to think that once would be better yet. As it is, he has no Sunday to himself. The Lord's Day is a day of bondage to him. It is to him a day of the hardest tasks, when it should be a day of freedom and happiness and joy to him.

It may be asked, "Is it not better that every day should be a Sunday. Why attempt to set a special day apart from all the rest? Would it not be better if all days were alike, and all days were high and noble?" That is not the question. The question is this: Is it possible for you to lift all the days of the week up so that they shall average as high as one day which is set apart for special observance? I can understand how persons of culture, of leisure, and training, may come into such a state of mind that all the days of the week shall be supremely blessed to them; but I know that most men are so circumstanced that it is simply impossible for them to do it. And to undertake to obliterate the Sabbath day by making all days Sundays, is to substitute despotism for the few privileges that are secured to men through that day. You take away all the Sunday which men can observe, if you give them only a distributive Sunday running through the whole week.

Nay, all days cannot be made alike—can they? Yes, they can to me, if I am in the receipt of an independent income, and I can command my time, and I can take part of each day for meditation, and I can go where I please on any day, and stay as long as I please; but how about the apprentice boy who is waked up at five, or four, or three o'clock in the morning, and goes to work, and has not a moment that he can call his own until eight o'clock at night, when he tumbles into bed, and sleeps till the next morning, when he again goes through the same experience, which is his experience the whole week? Go and talk to him about making every day a Sunday. It is these well-to-do, plump, round-faced, smiling people who talk about making every day a Sunday. But the great mass of people—the poorer orders of society—those who are under the control of others, and on whom the hard tasks of life fall—they cannot afford to have all days made alike. Sunday is

the poor man's tower. It is the refuge of the man that is tasked and taxed by his employers. And it behooves him not to tread it under foot and destroy it, but to lift it up and preserve it, that at least on one day of the week he may be God's free man.

Brethren, friends, fellow citizens, there is nothing that I have more at heart than to rescue the observance of the Lord's Day. It lies very near to me, and is very dear to me. But I do not believe you can rescue it by law. The Sabbath day, to be rightly maintained, must be made honorable. It must be made a delight. It must be so kept, and such views must be inculcated in respect to it, that men shall look upon it as a day of release from bondage and toil, and that it shall suggest to them something higher than mere animal pleasure. The German Sundays, in which men gather together in beer gardens to drink, are sinks in which men drain their passions; and their influence is not refining. There may be a little of the social element connected with them; but they do not promote thought-power, nor moral culture, nor refinement. They tend only to hilarity, and to the gratification of the lower nature. They lead to more indulgence where men need less, and to no development where men need development most.

It is your interest and mine, not so much to discuss this question as a historical question, not so much to fight and quarrel about the obligations, and the grounds of the obligations, which are imposed upon us by this day, as to avail ourselves of the great privileges which it secures to us. We are all in the same boat, and are making for one port. We are seeking to so develop ourselves that we may be translated into the kingdom of God's glory hereafter. Here is a day that has come down to us by association through four thousand years—a day of mercy, of rest, of affection, of joy, of education, and culture, in the highest sense of the terms. Let us maintain this day. Let us so administer it, and so in all our houses organize it, and so everywhere keep it, that it shall be in the sight of all men not a yoke, not a restriction, not a denial of the liberty of their rights, but a delight in the Lord, honorable, full of joy, and full of good fruits. Make Sunday sweet, and then men will take it. Be happier yourself; be kinder yourself; be more social yourself; be more a man yourself; let God's love flame out of your heart, as it never has before, rub away animosities; give the unwelcome hand so long kept back by anger; make your heart burn toward the hearts of your fellow men, and let men see that Sunday is the altar at which you kindle your fire, and they will come to long for it, and believe in it.

A community or nation, if kept at all in safety, will be kept by those that keep Sunday; but no community and no nation will long be kept in safety in which Sunday is not kept.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we delight to draw near to thee, and to make known to thee all our wants. Thou dost not fail us. Thou art ever more willing to give than we are to receive. Yea, before we know our own wants, while arising afar off, they are discerned of thee, and thy ministers are appointed, and they are satisfied. So that we are nourished and unconsciously fed by the hand of God. All our life is a marvel of thy care, and of thy goodness; and we have learned to rejoice in it, and to esteem things better than they are in themselves from the source whence we obtain them. All the gifts of life are perfumed with thy touch. It is because thou hast thought of us that they are more than meat and drink to us. Our own thoughts by which we plan, and our own skill by which we achieve, are more to us than the pleasure of pride. For thou hast sustained this life which works; and all success is first of thee, and then through us. So that in all things we touch thee, and are touched of thee. In thee we live, and move, and have our being. And the amplitude of life, its variety, its riches, is in that which brings thee near, and makes us most concious that we are not of the earth, nor of the brute creation, though we so nearly touch them on the one side, but that we are of God, and are his sons, and are to escape the touch of matter, and all the brutality of the lower life, and are to rise to become as the angels of God, when cleansed from sin and imperfection and the imprisonment of this bondaging world.

And now, O Lord, we pray that the light of these truths may shine so clearly, that not care, nor dust, nor din, nor any other thing shall hide or drown them. We pray that we may live to see Him who is invisible. May we live by our inward sight, and not by the fleshly eye nor by the outward senses. Grant unto us that surpassing faith, that all-creating power, by which we shall behold the truth, and the principles of thy government, and the joys of our superior life by which we shall come into communion with things not tangible, lifted up above us, and yet not far from us, and by which we may live with the sound of the other life in our ears evermore. Oh! that we may aspire to that higher manhood, that nobler purity, that strength which is of God. And we pray that while we have the wisdom of serpents, we may have the harmlessness of the dove. May we live wise in our day and generation—wise for things secular; wise for the state in which we live, and for the household, and for all that are dependent upon us. But also may we have that wisdom which cometh down from above, which is pure and peaceable, and full of the good fruit of love.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt forgive us our selfishness, and our pride, and our sordidness, and our abandonment of things spiritual, and our inordinate attachment to things carnal and temporal. Forgive, we beseech of thee, our unkindness one to another. Forgive us that in honor we have sought our own selves first, and not others; that we have not borne one anothers burdens, and fulfilled the law of God. Forgive us that we have made ourselves unlovely by our evil carriage. Forgive us that we have failed to discharge those obligations of love and gratitude which thy sufferings and thy death and thy resurrection have laid every one of us under.

And we beseech of thee not only that thou wilt pardon the past, but that thou wilt not be weary of thy task of pity. Yet open the way of the future for us, that we may walk without stumbling; that we may live with a higher purpose and better accomplishment; that we may not only be forgiven for past sin, but be cured of sin, and of those infirmities out of which so many transgressions spring. And we pray that thou wilt fill us with the mind and will of God. And may we know his truth, in so far as knowing it may lead to our perfection. And may we study to approve ourselves before men and, above all, before God, before whom we must come, and to whom we must give an account of every deed done in the body. Prepare us for that great account. Prepare us for the issues of that tremendous day

which awaits us. And we pray that we may so live here, that then we may have on our side, cheering and strengthening and lifting us up, the light and the power of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Bless this congregation, and all the families that are represented in it. Be in every household. Bring peace where there is trouble, and joy where there is sorrow. Sanctify thy dispensation to every one. If there be those that are suffering bereavment, wilt thou comfort them. If there be those that are in disappointment and overthrow, lift them graciously up. *Cast down, but not destroyed*—may that evermore be our triumph in adversity.

And we pray that thou wilt grant that all may have their temporal prosperity blessed to their spiritual good. May it not make them more worldly and more selfish, dragging them down. May it inspire them with heroic benevolence and divine wisdom, with true gratitude and true fellowship with men. And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all that are strangers in our midst. Separated from those they love, may they find here, in thine house, and among thine own people, a new brotherhood, and a new home. Here, to-day, feed them, and comfort them. Speed them in the errands of thy providence to which thou hast called them. May neither their faith, nor their hope, nor their courage fail. And though men may seem to have fallen away from them, may they believe that God doth not forget them, and that he will never leave them nor forsake them. Their father's God, who bore them onward to the end, will bear their sons. And we pray that all of us may more and more put our trust, not in the failing, visible things of life, not in the towers that men have built, and the engines of our own strength, but in the presence of our God. May we keep fast hold of thee, so that we may be neither shaken nor uprooted by the storm.

And grant thy blessing to rest upon all thy Churches. We thank thee that thou art bringing together more and more of thy people, and that the prayers of those who have long striven before thee are beginning to be heard, and that men are thinking of things in which they agree, and are being drawn by confidence and sympathy, and that the one love in Jesus Christ is uniting his followers on earth. Even so, speed thy good work, until all thy people everywhere shall see eye to eye, and join hand in hand, and thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Which we ask for Christ Jesus sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Lord God of our fathers, bless their posterity. Bless us, and bless our children, and our childrens' children. Unite us in fellowship and love. Teach us how to use our privileges without by their use oppressing others. May we, loving thee, love one another, seeking not the things that perish in the using, but things that feed once and forever. The bread unperishing, and the water unwasting, and the life that never dies—may these be ours.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt bless our land. Look at the myriads that are toiling for leave to be. How narrowly they live! How poor they are! How little they have of God! and how much of the world! How men snarl and snap at each other, and seek to oppress each other, and seek by their arrogant power to tread down others that they themselves may rise! Lord God, teach men how to love one another, and how to help one another; and may the day of the Son of Man be a precious day in our midst. And as thou didst come to open the prison doors, and bring light into dark-

ness, and release and relief to the captive, so may the day called by thy name be a day of remembrance; a day of kindness; a day of gladness; a day of the Holy Ghost; a day of justice; a day of God among men. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

SYMPATHY OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT.

"Always the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. VIII., 26.

It is not to be supposed that the Divine Spirit is here said to utter audible outcry in the presence of God; nor are we necessarily to understand that the groanings, the sighs, which men under profound religious aspirations make, are directly the influence of the Divine Spirit—that is, that men are merely, as it were, the pipe through which the sound is produced; but rather, that all those high experiences of men's souls who hunger and thirst after righteousness, by which they long and sigh and groan, are in them the result and work of that Divine Spirit. It is the interpretation that is given to invisible truth by the Spirit of God that leads men to these yearnings and desires. These higher forms of Christian experience are therefore wrought in men, and they are signs of the work of God that is going on in the human soul.

A soul that is born into the kingdom of divine love is like an infant that has come into the human family. It has life; but it has everything to learn about life. It is helpless, ignorant, inexpert; but the whole household, on the human plane, is organized to meet the exigency of infant life, by surrounding it with an atmosphere of love and of pity. The wealth of its parents has provided a protection from the seasons. The roof and the walls defend it, and not the less because they do it silently and unobtrusively. They are no less the work of the parents' love, because the child becomes used to them, and sees them, year by year, all the way up from childhood to manhood. The house is as the natural world. In the parallel and analogy, natural laws, like the roof and the walls, are not the less expressions of the divine provident care because we have become used to them.

The whole order of the household—its interior economy—is determined with reference to the best welfare of the children. The love of the parent's heart furnishes to the child the care and the tenderness which it needs. And the parent's experience and worldly wisdom and

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provident skill mark out the beginning of the child's life, and weigh and plan a business for the child. So that from the moment of its helpless birth up through the unfolding series of its years, it is surrounded, quite without its own cognizance, and without much of its own help, with a training-school where health and wisdom and experience are providing for its whole welfare, until it is able to take care of itself.

Now, the whole scheme of this world is like that. The natural globe, natural laws, the divinely-arranged economy of human society, are all of them but ministrants in the household which God has made, and into which men are born helpless; and all of them are under the supervision of parental divine love, working for the young immortal.

Let me read the whole passage:

> Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know all things work together for good to them that love God—to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

It is quite possible for one to assume not only a monarchical standpoint, but the standpoint of a monarch who is using the great and unconscious forces of nature, to interpret this passage so as to make it not lovely—not attractive—certainly not true. For if we undertake to say that God, by special act and attribute of foreknowledge, saw all things from the beginning to the end, and that, seeing all things, he tied things where they were to be, and, as it were, put engines of irresistible force all the way along down through life, so that when men came to the different points in their career they could not help themselves, but went to the right or the left because the reversible switch had been turned, and they had to go where the track was; if we believe that God predestinates men to this and that and the other thing, and that when they have once come into the charmed circle of divine fate they cannot help themselves, and are to be glorified or damned, as the case may be; if we give that governmental and monarchical interpretation to it, you will set every thinking man, almost, kicking against the pricks, and you will be launched on that voyage of infinite argument and infinite confusion which has grown up since man had an existence, and will find yourself vainly endeavoring to solve those doctrines of free-will, fate, predestination, fore-ordination, election, effectual calling, irresisti-

ble decrees, and all those great questions which no man ever yet was able to manage—except while he was yet speaking. For when *his neighbor came and searched him* he had to speak again. This passage, if you take it on the ground of a governmental and monarchical administration, is a declaration of one of those great outlying views which defies inquisition, and is far beyond the reach of the unaided understanding. But if you take this passage to be paternal, in the line of the figure which I have opened, somewhat, there is no difficulty in it.

Every father and mother, when the helpless child is born into the household, rejoice and give thanks to God. They rejoice and give thanks, not because of what it is now, but because of what it may become. The mother gives to it her nights and days. The father gives to it all his leisure and all his occupation. And what is it that strikes joy down through the burdened and oppressed soul of many a mechanic, many a merchant, many a banker, many a literary man, in the intervals of leisure, but the thought of that light which is burning at home—the blessedness of the cradle? The mother broods over it, and the father broods over it; and they say, "That child shall be brought up to honor, and truth, and virtue, and usefulness." The father lays his own life along the road, and takes sight across it, and in the light of his experience he marks out what he means that the child shall be; and the mother takes sight along the level of love, and determines what the child shall be. The father and mother work and co-work, determining what, if their efforts are successful and their hopes are realized, that child shall be. They foresee and predestinate, and call effectually, and work together to bring that child up good and true and prosperous.

We are taught to say, "Our Father who art in heaven." We are taught that when men are born into this world, God looks, in a sympathetic paternal way, along down the path of life, and says, "All the power, and all the sympathy, and all the coöperative influences of the world, and all nature itself, are to serve this young, trusting, loving, immortal spirit." *To those that love God all things shall work together for good.* The moment a man puts himself into sympathetic communication with God, nature and time and all the forces thereof assume new relations to him. The moment a soul binds itself trustingly to the bosom of its loving God by love, nature has God's command to take care of him, and providence has God's command to take care of him, and God's wakeful Spirit forever broods over him and works in him.

This doctrine of the divine sympathy has here a specialty. While the general doctrine which I have unfolded is unquestionably true, here is a special application of it. And the general doctrine is made more affecting and more desirable by this specialty which is given to it. I

refer to the declaration in our text, that "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

Everybody, I do not care how dull he is, loves to see a great nature that devotes itself, not to those who are on a level with him, but to those who are beneath him. We expect that those who are drawn together by affinity will be devoted to each other. We should expect that if one Lord Bacon were in conference with another Lord Bacon, they would sit together and commune all through the livelong night. But to see a man whose head is a vital encyclopedia, who knows all things, as it were, go past his equals, and go down below those that are able to understand the main part of him, and devote himself to children in the family; nay, more than that, to see him take care of little children in that spot where they break out in things that are bad; to see him take care, not of children that reward his pains by a quick understanding of what he says, but of children that are dullards; to see this man of learning, this president of some college, this mighty professorial, encyclopediac man, take the unpromising child of the family where he is spending the summer, or where he is an occasional visitor, on his knee, and try to beat into its thick head one idea after another; to see him pay no special attention to the other children of the family who are bright and intelligent, and manifest no particular sympathy for those with whom he would be supposed naturally to fraternize; to see him patiently continuing this labor of love from day to day and from week to week, working the child along, working him along, and working him along, until he succeeds in getting something into him, and bringing him up so that the neighbors say, "Well this child, after all, may turn out to be something; there seems to be a mine in him which, if worked, will yield some return; that man has quarried till he has struck gold in him"—to see such a man denying himself of those things which his education and culture eminently fit him to enjoy, that he may inspire in the dullest child a desire for knowledge, and develop in that child those elements which it most lacks—is there any human being worthy of the name, who would not admire it as noble and almost divine? "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our"—what? Our aspiration towards things high and beautiful? Oh, yes. Our noblest dreams? Yes, doubtless. Our grandest purposes? Oh yes, the Spirit helpeth them. Our relative excellences? Yes; undoubtedly. Our generosity and magnanimity? Without a doubt the Spirit helps them. All the moods of nobility into which we come? To be sure, the Spirit helps them. But that is not it. "The Spirit likewise also helpeth our *infirmities*." The teaching of Scripture is that God, instead of standing over us with a rod of justice, with a sword, to chastise us for our faults, stands by our side to help our failings.

Listen to the way in which it is more largely wrought out in the fourth chapter of Hebrews:

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have no high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

What, then, do we understand by *infirmity?* It is, in general, feebleness, weakness; but, in the spiritual application which it has in the New Testament, it indicates a weakness of a peculiar kind—namely, *moral* weakness. Feebleness of conception and knowledge in religious things is infirmity of knowledge—a lack of it; poverty of it. Feebleness of the will-power by which we resist evil—that is an infirmity. There are thousands of men who do wrong because they have very feeble resisting power. There are multitudes of persons who fall into wrong courses on account of the feebleness of their power of self-restraint, which is only a variation of the will-power. There are many who find it extremely hard to lay a hold-back hand on the impetuosity of their passions. Great feebleness in the presence of evil, with a peculiar susceptibility to temptation, will be apt to be carried away by it.

This is hinted at where, in another place, it is said that God *will not suffer you to be tempted more than you are able to bear*—indicating that there are some who, the pressure being brought upon them, can bear it, and that there are others who, the pressure being brought upon them, cannot bear it.

In a conflict of knights some will rush together with poised spears, which, striking each other's shields in a given way, will both be shivered to the handle. The knights, under such circumstances, *having done all, stand.* Others, paralyzed by weakness, rush against their antagonists, and being unable to resist the shock, are hurled to the dust, and vanquished. Their overthrow is the result of infirmity, or weakness—not weakness that amounts to spiritual imperfection, but weakness in the sense of feebleness. Feebleness of the whole economy by which we are to come into knowledge, and through knowledge into virtue, and through virtue into vital godliness in the soul—this is the general meaning of infirmity. In short, it implies a nature that means to do right, that wants to do right, but that feels itself met by influences that are stronger, more cunning, and more seductive than it has skill to resist. This explains the majority of those transgressions over which men mourn. Nine parts in ten of those sins which men confess and mourn over, are sins which they did not set out to commit, which they did not want to commit, which they are sorry they have committed, but which they committed through weakness—weakness in

the power of understanding and interpreting facts; weakness in that general knowledge of cause and effect which might have saved them from wrong-doing. Half of our sins are violations of natural law—if there is any distinction between natural laws and moral laws. The greater proportion of men's sins are those which they commit through infirmity.

The attempt to maintain a spiritual life in this world is an attempt against great adversarial powers. It is no small thing for a man born into a fleshly body, connected with the material world, and beat in upon by ten thousand biasing and sympathizing influences which come from the body of human society, to lift himself out from all that is low and carnal into an atmosphere where he can see clearly, and understand, and maintain vigilance, persevering unto the end. And God is not indifferent to the task and tax which one undertakes when, with so many obstacles to contend against, he endeavors to live a life of obedience. God looks upon it as a thing most difficult. He knows it is a thing hard in itself. He knows, too, that the majority of men are weak, so that it is extremely difficult for them to do right things and avoid wrong things. God does not stand like a burning furnace of rage and wrath to consume a sinner because he sins. He pities a sinner. He sympathizes with the poor and the feeble. Probably he is more lenient toward the sinner than toward any other creature in the universe. Though he sees that his sin is sin; though he sees how devastating its tendencies are; though he sees how full it is of pain that may go on breeding pain forever and forever; though he has all knowledge of what is the exceeding sinfulness of sin, there is no being that looks upon it with more pity, more compassion, more sympathetic helpfulness, than that same God.

Let us specialize some of the spheres of sympathy in which the Spirit of God acts with reference to us. I shall but glance at the most of them, in order that I may spend more time on the last one, which is less frequently a matter of consideration.

All the difficulties which lie in our life in the material body; all our physical wants; all our bodily weaknesses and sicknesses, and the infelicities that arise from them—these things men who are in health are very hard and uncharitable about. Many a person with whom you have to do disappoints you—does not fulfill your expectation. Many a person lets fly casual words which irritate you. But if you knew out of what utter weakness, if you knew out of what a sense of almost deathly feebleness, these things often come, methinks it would excite in you, as doubtless it does in God, a spirit of pity and compassion, rather than of blame for their wrong-doing. There needs to be pity for the sinning, although their sins are to be repressed. God has sympathy

and compassion for those who have temptations that are preying upon them, and who are weakened by over-exertion, or who suffer in body from hunger and thirst and cold and various wants, or who are in discouragement and despondency of mind, so that they are led to do things which are wrong. Society may disregard them (as it mostly does; for men are very cruel to wrong-doers on the lower plane of life); but there is one Heart that never forgets them, nor ceases to compassionate them. There is one summery place for people who are sinning or doing evil things. It is the heart of the Divine Spirit.

What appetites and passions inhere in the body, and are its engineers, and minister to its existence, and feed and strengthen it, and overact, or act in disparity, and lead to partialisms, governing the whole economy of life in men! There are men who sin on account of these lordly elements, which dominate over the other parts of their nature. And yet, God, though he is not indulgent toward their sin, sympathizes with men who are pressed out of all measure by these internal forces. It is not any less wrong for a man to be ugly because he has a fountain of ugliness in him, or because he has a belluine nature to contend with. This cruel and wicked disposition is to be repressed. But there never was a man whose stomach and liver, whose bodily organs, and whose mental forces, combined to keep him in a suffering and exaggerated condition out of which come the most intolerable manifestations of temper, that God did not feel pity for him. When you see such a man, you call him a hateful old curmudgeon; and he comes to despise himself; and he gets to be ugly; and he becomes desperate, and does things that are wrong, and even commits crimes. But there is a Being who looks on these things, and knows what the man suffers, and what the infirmities are out of which they spring. There is many a man that is disagreeable in a neighborhood, that you do not like to have much to do with, that mixes bitterness in the cup of life for his own lips and the lips of others, and is a disturber of his own household, and, in a moment of passion, commits the fatal deed which shall carry him to the gallows. And he says, "There is no use now. I shall die, and I shall be damned when I die; and I may as well take it as I find it." But still God broods over him, and pities him, and would help him. And if there could be developed in every such man a belief that there is a Spirit that pities his infirmities, while he reprehends and punishes his actual transgressions; if every sinning man could be made to feel that God is sorry for him, and that he has a nature which would lead him to do by the sinner as a father or mother would do by an erring child, training him out of his childish faults and into manly virtues; if every man that has fallen into evil ways could have that knowl

edge, how many men might be transformed, and made better, if not perfect, in manhood.

In all the cares or burdens or trials which arise from our condition of temporal life, we have also the thought and compassion and sympathy of the Spirit of God. Men feel that when they go into business they go away from religion, and that secular cares and burdens and trials are, as it were, counterparts to virtues and religious experiences. But if there be anything susceptible of demonstration, it is that the decree of God made the secular experiences of life a means of grace. The necessities to which we are subject in life are normal. It was on purpose that God made us merchants, and mechanics, and toilers in every way. To *work* is not the curse. To *drudge* is. To *work* is a part of the blessing of our organization, and of that whole organization of society by which all men are necessitated to occupy morning and noon and night in tasking and taxing their physical powers or their understanding. It is a part of the vast economy of education. Intellectual, social and moral education inheres in that. And our religion is to go with it. It is to be a part of our experience, as our experience is a part of our moral and religious life. And so, all the cares, and all the burdens, and all the trials, and all the mingled matters of experience which make men so tired of life—these are infirmities. They are a part of that constitution of things and of nature which God recognizes, and which draws the heart of God continually toward men in all helpfulness. He does not say that sinning is not sinful, but he recognizes the liability to sin. And as the parent in the family, recognizing the child's liability to sin, overhangs the child, and seeks to lead him away from wrongs that come out of its weaknesses, so the heart of God overhangs with sympathy and perpetual help those that love him, and are willing to receive the blessings that he would confer upon them.

God also sympathizes with us in all our domestic infirmities—in the carriage of ourselves one towards another. I have noticed in concerts that if two violinists play together, although, before they came upon the platform they tuned their instruments, no sooner do they get ready to strike off than they try their instruments again. And by the time they have played one or two pieces, there is such divergence between the instruments that they require to be again tuned. But the violin of the musician has not one fifth as many strings as the human violin has, and it is not half as sensitive to the changes of the weather, and does not need to be screwed up or down half so often. And you cannot keep this little mechanical instrument in tune except with great pains. The least jar, or the least atmospheric change, produces an abberation this way or that. And do you suppose you can take two instruments, each having fifty strings, more susceptible even

than those of a violin, and have them in tune one with another, in the midst of the many and powerful influences which are constantly tending to produce discord between them?

A man that knows how to take his mind, with all its sensibilities, and bring it into tune with divine love, and who knows how to carry it harmoniously through all the hours of the day, so that it shall all the time be in tune with other minds, has very little to learn before it goes to heaven.

Now, our business in life is to try to keep this fiddle of ours so that it shall be at peace, first with its own self, and then with others. But we cannot keep at peace with ourselves so long as one side is blaming the other side; so long as the lower feelings are rasping the higher feelings; so long as combativeness is howling at the moral sentiments; so long as the appetites and passions are uproarious, and are carrying on all sorts of mischief. It is a hard thing for a man to take such an instrument as the human mind, and keep it in tune with itself, and also keep it in accord with this that and the other mind, with their different temperaments, and in all their varying moods, and under all their trials and swayings and warpings and biasings. I tell you, when a man says that he is perfect already, I feel that there is only one of two places for him, and that is heaven or the lunatic asylum. Not that I do not believe in perfection. I do believe in it. I believe it is *possible* in this world. But I never have seen the accomplishment of it. And the specimens that are generally sent out as samples have not induced me to buy. I believe that ideally there is provision for men to be perfect. And I believe there are a great many that are perfect in a certain way. That is to say, there is no difficulty in a man being perfect if you make the standard low enough. If one comply with certain metaphysical conditions of perfectness, I do not know why he may not be metaphysically perfect, though at the same time he is personally and dispositionally imperfect. But when you consider what it is to be absolutely perfect; when you consider what perfection requires; when you consider what wide-reaching comprehension, what exquisite planning, what peace within, what harmony with other men, what accomplishing power in things right and true, and what a realization not only of the objects of this life but of the fruitions of the life which is to come, are required in those that are perfect, you do not hope to see many perfect people on earth. There is nothing so grand as the kingdom of the human soul, with its wide-reaching results, its deep penetrating roots, and its magnificent blossoms and fruit, where perfection reigns; but we are not apt to come across men in this world to whom we can point and say, "They are perfect." Angels laugh at the idea of men becoming perfect in the

ways which they think will lead to perfection; and we might as well wipe out the fantasy which prevails on this subject.

The hardest thing for us to do is first to live right within ourselves, and then to live right with each other. There must be justice not only in the speech of our lips, but in our thoughts. I hold that a true man no more indulges in evil thoughts than in evil expressions. One who has real nobility of soul does not even allow himself to think uncharitable things of men, but is purer toward them in his inward life than in any outward development.

Now, in this great conflict, where there is so much turmoil and rasping and irritation, where there is so much of sadness, where there are so many hearts broken, where there are so many men that carry burdens, it is a comfort to me to hear God say, by his brooding Spirit, "I help, in those respects, your infirmities." It comforts me to hear it said, "Ye have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with a a feeling of your infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as ye are, yet without sin."

Lastly, the sympathy of God is with the hidden and superior trials of the nobler parts of our souls—with those troubles which spring from the exercise of the higher traits, as well as with those which I have specified.

In the first place, there are a great many poetic natures who are subject to extreme variations; who are all flush and hopeful in one hour, and all drooping and empty in another; who are subject both to the intensities of belief, and to the intensities of unbelief; who at times, hardly understanding the constitution from which these things spring, are perplexed and annoyed; but who, at other times, discerning the forces that are at work in and around them, are cheered and encouraged. "All things are open and naked unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;" and God sympathizes with our moods, with the ever-shifting shades of transient and poetic feeling,—which are said to be "imaginary," as if the imagination were not a fact as much as any other fact in life.

Then there are those who are living in a perpetual discontent of this life. They cannot cease to take an interest in it. Nature provides that they shall not let go even if they wish to. But there are times when there comes to them such a sense of the littleness of life, its evanescence, and its valuelessness, that they seem to themselves to be as so many ants or worms. The whole economy of life oftentimes seems to be one of such vanity and vexation of spirit that a man is almost willing to lay down his burden, even if he does it by his own volition, and go out of life, saying to himself, "Better is the day of one's death than the day of one's birth." One is tempted, under such circumstances, to

doubt himself; to doubt his friends; to doubt everybody; to doubt everything. All the weaknesses of men, all their short-comings, all their petty treacheries and insincerities, all their lies, all their snatches of ambition, all their fever-heats, all the elements that go to constitute the imperfection of a nascent and growing creature, come up before one's mind, and he is very strongly tempted to scoff and sneer at them. And where this feeling of contempt for one's fellow men is accompanied by a sense of one's own worthlessness, the whole world is good for nothing in his view. In such moods a man is ashamed of himself, and he hates himself for falling into such philanthropic states of mind. Nevertheless, there is a *Spirit that helps our infirmity;* that knows how we are tried; that understands our nature; that teaches and succors and cures men; and that by love brings them back to reason, and to charity, and to peace.

Then, there are moods in which annihilation reigns. The eye sees not, and the ear hears not, and the understanding understands not, and the heart feels not. One is dead, seemingly. There are times when men of a sensitive nature seem to themselves to lose their hold on life. They fall off from the interest of the human race, and from everything. And these arid, desert experiences God understands. He knows what they come from. He knows how many transgressions spring out of them. And he pities and helps them.

Then there are those moments of intense yearning which turn all common feelings pale. There are those fears lest truth shall have been a fable, after all. There are those hours of unspeakable anguish which men pass through where they seem to themselves to be letting go of all that is most sacred in the past; where all the thoughts that are perfumed with the associations of home-life are taking flight; and where the tree of religious life that once was full of birds, and full of blossoms and leaves for the healing of want, is bare and desolate. In this mood the Bible seems to them but a congeries of chance things. And there are times when the soul throws up its hands in despair, and gives up everything.

I do not blame these states. I feel sorry for them. And among those that experience them there are, not unfrequently, great and reverent natures—men who are making a transition from the old to the new; that is, making the new newer than it was before. There must needs be some that shall go through such passages of feeling. They are afraid to express their doubts, because there is nothing less sympathized with than doubt and unbelief. To say that a man is an infidel, is to put him out of the pale of sympathy, almost. And yet, a man may be an infidel, and be a better man than you are. A man may not reverence the sanctuary, and worship the Book, and give his

adhesion to creeds, as you do; but he may be in a state in which God is preparing him, by suffering, to lead men out of their troubles. The very sufferings from fear and doubt and apprehension through which a man is going may be fitting him for the work which God has for him to do. And though a man may be enveloped in the darkness of unbelief, and though he may be fractious and wayward, and refuse to have God to rule over him, he may not be so bad as many who do believe, and do not live up to the light which they have. An unbelief that springs from real honest investigation and aspiration for higher truth or for a better expression of universal truth than they have ever had, is an experience which few have sympathy for in this world. But the heart of God will take care of those that turn to him with filial love, and will bring them through all these moods.

If there are any in this congregation who are unsettled, sometimes thinking one thing, and sometimes another, now going into churches that have the most outward forms and visible worship, and where the senses have rest, and now breaking away and going into churches where services appeal more to the higher reason and the moral sentiments, you may seem to yourself an Ishmaelite, a vagabond, an unworthy wretch; and yet, you have not gone out of the charmed circle of God's thought and sympathy and love. He broods over you still. And though you let go of everything else, do not let go of faith and trust. Keep the avenue open between you and God. Keep the door of your heart open so that there shall be that intercourse between your soul and the Divine Spirit by which he shall bring you safely to a glorious issue.

In view of the truths thus opened, I remark, first, that the administrative power of the moral world is love—not power, and not penalty. Penalty is a part of justice, and a part of the organization of nature. We do not need to undertake to prove that sin brings pain, and that pain is the penalty of the transgression of law, and that it is a part of the original economy of God's universe that sin and suffering should be indissolubly connected. The whole creation is a witness of that. All the tears that have been shed are so many showers of the testimony of the anguish of the world. All its discord, all its immeasurable depths of suffering, are so many memorials of this original and organic and invisible constitution of justice. That which we needed was not a revelation to tell us that God was just, and that law was sovereign, and that disobedience had penalty, and that penalty would smite and work, and smite and work, and smite and work. That did not need to be revealed. The eye saw it; the ear heard it; every sense experienced it. Our whole life has been but one voluminous history of this original economy of the globe, for purposes of truth, and obedience,

and of justice followed by penalty. What we needed to know, was, that this was not the only nor the dominant influence, but that there was over all this a power which was something better than this to our apprehension. The power of love, and the power of sympathy, and the power of succor through sympathy and love—that is the revelation of the Bible. That is the New Testament doctrine. It is that while we are living in a world which expresses God's organic purpose of justice and penalty, we are also living in a world which is overarched by a domestic economy, by a celestial economy, by a providence and a grace, which work by the power of sympathy and love. So that while nature teaches the justice of God, and the punishment of sin, the Gospel teaches the recuperative power of divine sympathy and divine love.

Wherefore, it is to me an unspeakable comfort that the tendency of the historic influence of the past, the great growth of the future, and the wondrous and distinctive peculiarity of the day in which we live, is to work away from materialism and sin and penalty, toward spirituality and obedience and love. Justice, like a comet, sweeps away from the sun; but love, like that comet reclaimed and turned, shoots right toward it. And we are on the way toward it; only when we reach it, we shall never turn and fly away from it again.

Therefore, in time and history we have seen the worst. Individuals will be as bad as they have been, single organizations will be as bad, nations will be as bad; but, taking the world as a whole, it is rising, and is to rise. *No weapon formed against God shall prosper.* Let men seek to fill the earth with doubt and unbelief: there will be a light put through that. Let men seek to make governments throughout the world more monarchical: their efforts will be neutralized by the march of the principle of universal Liberty. God's power will break through and shatter all combinations that undertake to hinder the onward progress of the race. Mankind are yet to be enfranchised. Intelligence, virtue and moral inspiration, joined to the spirit of God, are going to prevail. God is abroad on that work, and is working wondrously, and working comprehensively far beyond our perception; and he is working in the line of love; and he will work until he has repaired all the mischief that has been done by sin and imperfection.

I remark, secondly, that cases of the longest delayed repentance are not without hope. The man that has been the worst in life; the man whose case is most difficult of management; the man that has the most to overcome and the least to show of good living, has encouragement to repent and turn to God.

There are a great many men who are reckless, and who say, "There is no use in your troubling yourself about me. Go for others. I am a castaway, and am spoiled. Do not waste your time and strength in trying to do anything for me."

It is very true that an old tree can never be made to be like a young one. You cannot train it. But you may take a tree that is a hundred years old, and that is dead with the exception of one or two branches, and take away the spent earth from about its roots, and put fresh soil in its place, and prune off all but the living branches, and give it a chance to sprout again, and it will thrive and become a fruit-growing tree once more; though it will never be such a tree as it would have been if it had been trained right from the start.

A man may be dead on one side, and dead on another side; he may be full of evil on this side and on that side; he may be quite beyond his own power of recuperation; but if he can be brought under the vivifying influence of the spirit of God, and if he give himself up to the direction of the divine power, it is possible for him, though he be one of the worst of men, to be reformed. The lyingest man may become a truth speaker; the hardest drinking man may become sober; the most lecherous man may become pure; the most deceitful man may become upright; the most dishonest man may become honest; the most vindictive man may be made peaceable and mild. The eagle may change his nature and the leopard his spots, in this new economy of divine grace, and there is no man in my hearing to whom I may not most freely say, "The Spirit understands your sins; he knows the causes from which they spring; he loves you; he is the best friend you have in the universe; and if God be for you who can be against you?" Not your sins, not the devil, no tempting influences, can lead you to destruction if once you commit yourselves to the hands of the living God, and keep near to him. God can save you, and nothing else can.

I remark, once more, that this sympathy of God is not given as a reward of man's own well-doing or of his victory in the struggles which he has been called to wage. I say this to meet an almost universal feeling, rather than conviction, that if a man becomes a Christian, and lives aright, he shall have God's favor and love. Children feel so, and young people feel so, and grown people feel so. Men are apt to say, "If I were to avoid all vices, and leave off all faults, and read the Bible, and say my prayers every day, and go to church like a good Christian, and keep Sunday, and watch my conduct in every way, so that God should see that I was in earnest, I believe that he would give me the joy of his salvation." In other words, men have the notion that God holds divine help as a premium, and says, "Now study and work; and if you will come up to such a point I will give it to you. Otherwise you cannot have it." That is as if a physician should stand before a man who was suffering from excruciating cramps, and should hold out tempting fruits and solacing, refreshing and remedial drinks,

and offer to give them to him if he would stop the cramps and get up and come to him. If unaided he could have stopped his cramps and walked, he would not have sent for the doctor, and would not have thanked anybody to help him. What he wants is some one to come to his side and minister to him remedies that shall relieve his sufferings and restore his health and strength.

There is an impression that Christ is a premium-giver, and that he says, "If you will work and acquire a capital, then I will help you." No; there is given you a capital to begin with. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." You have the divine help to start on.

Before any daisy or violet, before any blossom, is seen in the field, the sun lies with its bosom to the ground, crying to the flower, and saying, "Why tarriest thou so long?" And day after day the sun comes, and pours its maternal warmth upon the earth, and coaxes the plant to grow and bloom. And when days and weeks have passed, the root obeys the call, and sends out its germ from which comes the flower. And it was the sun that brooded it into life. Had it not been for the sun's warmth and light, the flower could never have come to itself.

So the Eternal Spirit of God rests on the human soul, warming it, quickening it, calling it, and saying, "Oh, my son! where art thou?" And at last it is this divine sympathy and brooding influence that brings men to God, and leads them to say, "Am I not sinful?" and to yearn for something higher and purer and holier. It was God's work. He long ago was *working in you, to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

Therefore let me say to any man that wants to be a Christian, You need not feel that you must wait a week or a month before you can begin. God has been pleading with you already. It is he that gave you the thought of becoming a Christian; it is he that gave you the impulse to try to become one; it is he that gave you the first slight yearning warmth of soul which you experienced. He is beforehand with you. And he will not wait till you have achieved before he will achieve for you, by you, and in you. He is doing exceeding abundantly more for you than you can ask or think.

To the guidance of that good God let every soul commit itself. Feeble in knowledge; ignorant of the way in which we are walking, and of many things that hinder our progress; blinded as to truth, and moral truth; knowing less about those things which we most need to know than we think we do; constantly subject to oscillation and variation—to moods that go up, and moods that go down; proud, and selfish, and

hating and hateful; frequently cruel to each other, and more cruel to ourselves, deceiving others, and striving to deceive God; full of bitterness; of the earth, earthy—oh! what shall we do with such natures as ours, if there be no sweetening influence, no divine Leader, no spiritual Instructor?

To that dear Spirit of all light, and all knowledge, and all comfort, I commit you. Put your heart in the summer of divine love, and remember that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we draw near to thee not to behold darkness nor to hear thunders; for thou art the God of truth and justice; and thine administration is love. That our souls know right well. We have met together by thy power. We have been kept, if not unto salvation, yet in the way, and with the hope, with the anticipation, and with many of the joys and foretastes thereof. And we rejoice, O Lord, our God! that that work which thou hast begun in time, and which has been kept back and hindered by drought, by frost, and by ill-timed seasons, shall yet know a fairer summer, and shall spring up into blossom and into fruit, by the side of the river of the water of life. It is in this hope that we comfort ourselves all the way, in all the infelicities of the way—in all our sorrows; in all our infirmities; and in all those sins which cause us pain. We look forward from out of these things, and live by faith of the better land, and of the better life, and of that better self which shall be ours when we shall be where thou art—when we shall be transformed. For now are we what yet the drops are that hang dark in the heaven, unsunned and full of storm; and then shall we be as the drops are when the sun shines upon them, as they hang upon the grass or the flower, full of glory and beauty, the storm having gone by. Now we are hanging in trouble, in fear, and in pangs of pain; now we are driven about by mighty winds hither and thither; but then we shall be as the angels of heaven. Then, standing before thee in the light of knowledge, and in the purity of sympathy, and in the joy of full fruition, all thine excellence shall work upon us, and we shall be satisfied. Then we shall see thee as thou art. Thee, whom we have fondly longed for, we shall see more beautiful than our fancy had created thee; more august, more generous, more tender and loving, more full of beauty and grandeur, than we have been able to think thee. Not anything shall be taken away from thee; but that obstruction which mars our apprehension of thee, through the imperfectness of our understanding, shall be removed. As they who look out upon a garden of wondrous beauty, filled with rare plants and flowers, through windows full of wrinkles and contortions, behold these things, but see them unnaturally reflected; and as, when the light comes to them without interruption of glass, they behold the same things, and they appear sweet and perfect; so we, seeing through a glass darkly, distort thee with lines of our own thought, and of our own prejudice, and with the sharp points of our sins; but we shall behold thee without any medium between. We shall see thee as thou art. We shall see thee face to face. We shall be like thee, so that we can see thee out of our own experience. We shall interpret thee. And we shall

then be satisfied—yea glorified, filled and overflowing with rapture begun. And that experience shall have no decadence, no pause, no end.

Now, O Lord! we pray that this high hope may never die out of our heaven, nor suffer eclipse. May it be the one point toward which we shall push with all the force of our life. May we consider everything else as something aside, as by the way. May this one hope of our redemption, immortality, and glory, in the heavenly land through the Lord Jesus Christ, hang over us, as a guiding star. May it be to us as the gate of heaven. And though at times it may be hid for a little while, ere long may it break through every cloud and storm, to cheer and comfort us. And in all the strife which we make to live worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, be thou on our side. How many and how mighty are our adversaries! How much we contest the visible by things invisible! May we believe that thou art not far from any one of us, and that thou art carrying our armor for us, and inspiring our courage, and aiding the stroke of our hands, so that we shall be conquerors and more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

May we not desire to separate ourselves from the sympathy of the Lord Jesus Christ—no, not for one moment. May we be able to do those things that please thee, so that, standing by our side, we shall see thy face smiling upon us. May we avoid everything of which we cannot speak to thee, and on which we cannot ask thy blessing. Help us to overcome our sin and our inward badness, and what remains of earthiness in us. And may we seek more and more to fill our life and nature with those holy passions which shall bring us into sympathy and accord with thee and thy heavenly host. Bless this assembly that are gathered together here this morning. Hear their confession of their sins. Hear the silent confessions of waiting hearts, and hearts weighed down with imperfection and weakness. And we pray that thou wilt inspire hope in all those that desire to forsake evil. May they see that the way to virtue is straight and narrow; and that God stands therein to help them; and that he will never leave them nor forsake them; and that he will love them with more than a father's love, and strengthen them with the might of the everlasting God. And may none be afraid to turn from evil unto the pure way. May all feel that in turning toward thee, they turn toward power, and wisdom, and sympathy, and all gathering goodness.

And we pray, O Lord! if there be those in thy presence who are in sorrow or bereavement, who are in manifold affliction, that they may find the communion of the Spirit refreshing and comforting to their souls. For thou art the Consoler. Thou art the Comforter. Ten thousand hast thou comforted in prison, on the scaffold, in the wilderness, on beds of sickness, in solitary places. Thou hast comforted the home-sick and the heart-broken. O, Lord, the Comforter! how great has been thy work upon the earth! How full has the world been of thee! How wondrous has been the administration of thy grace! What dear and beauteous hours have descended into dark days! What angelic experiences have come to men in prisons! And how hast thou taught men the blessings of suffering and sorrow, and made them strong in weakness! May they be rich in poverty, and may they have joy in sorrow. Thou hast not forgotten the sacred lesson. Thou art the Comforter still. Not as one man is comforter to another art thou; but thy comforting influence is spread all abroad through the heaven and the earth, among all the sorrowing. Thou dost love with divine and sacred energy, and dost grant consolation to all that are in trouble. And if there are any to-day who are in bereavement or sorrow, and all of whose memory when they turn to the past is dark, O Lord! give them release; or, give them thy presence, if it be better that they should yet endure chastisement.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless those who are tried by their cares and perplexities. May they still have strength valiantly to do the work

which is appointed in thy providence for them, and to persevere unto the end.

We pray that there may be many and many of us who shall be builders in the day in which we dwell, establishing blessed institutions in society upon foundations which shall go on generations after they are gathered to their fathers, working for the amelioration of men.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who are laboring in the Sunday-school and in the Bible-classes. Bless the labors of those who are going from house to house, or into the highways, to minister to those that are not gathered into the sanctuary. And grant that they may have the Sacred Spirit and inspiration of God upon them. Teach them both to love and teach. Bless all the Churches that are gathered together this day in this city, and in the great city near us, and throughout all our land. We pray that thy servants may be prepared to preach the Gospel with more understanding and sympathy and power. May revivals of religion break out on every side, and spread through all our land, and stay the mighty evils and the mighty temptations to unbelief and doubt which are setting in. Grant that there may come this twilight of faith; and more and more may the heart prove mightier to reason than the head, so that all men may receive the truth unto salvation.

Bless we pray thee, the government of these United States. Bless the President, and all who are in authority with him. Bless the Congress assembled, and the Legislatures of the various States. May they devise things wise and honest. And grant, we beseech of thee, that our magistrates everywhere may be God-fearing men, who shall administer the trusts reposed in them with love toward their fellow men, and with sacred fidelity. May this nation grow purer with age, and with strength more humane. May it not tread down the weak and helpless, but be the benefactor of nations. And may its example kindle hope in other lands. Lead men step by step through virtue to ..ue piety, And at last may thy word, long delayed, be fulfilled, and the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thy blessing may rest upon the word spoken. Grant that there may be some souls drawn to make experience of thy love and thoughtful care. In thee we live. We have our being in thee. We desire to rejoice in the Lord. We desire to be strong in thee. We desire to walk in thy strength. And when, at last, through thine unspeakable favor we shall have accomplished the duty of our life, and passed by its wide and dreary reachings, grant that we may be admitted into thine heavenly kingdom, to dwell forever with the Lord.

And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be praise everlasting. *Amen.*

CONFLICTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1 PET. I. 6, 7.

It is here recognized that though a Christian has manifold joys and exhilarations in his career, he is subject to occasional "heaviness," or heart-sadness, "through manifold temptations." But it is recognized that such experiences belong to the very idea of piety, which is a process by which the spiritual in man gains a complete ascendency over the physical. And as the gold that is in the rock is subjected, first to severe blows, by which it is comminuted, and then to the action of various agents, and to the flame, in order that it may be extracted from its gross accompaniments, and become pure; so there is in man true spiritual gold, a spiritual element, a spiritual nature, that is to be separated from the lower and grosser elements of his being. And there is, in the providence of God, and in the scheme of grace, an economy by which this work is accomplished. It is clearly taught that there is, throughout the Christian life, the element of conflict, the element of trial,—the elements of temptation and suffering; and that these are not accidental; that they are not simply incidental to certain circumstances; that they inhere in the innermost nature of the work that is to be done; that they so much belong to it, that they who have none of these conflicts have no right to suppose that they are Christians. They are not sons unless God deals with them as he deals with all whom he is purifying and preparing for glory.

This experience may be gradual, diffusive, resulting at length in certain growths and ripenings and attainments. Or, it may be critical, peremptory. Usually it is both. We are carried through a series of trainings which are at work upon us all the time—minute influences; a thousand attritions of care; a thousand little events of sorrow; a thousand disappointments, each of which in itself is trifling, but the aggregate of which is most important in its result upon our normal de-

SUNDAY MORNING, June 12, 1870. LESSON: MATT. V. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection), Nos. 1344, 1235, 725.

velopment—evolving, unfolding, and confirming the inherent strength of character.

But then, besides the strong natures, there are natures that are disproportionately formed and unbalanced, natures that in their early experience were brought up unfortunately, that go through more critical experiences still. Every single element in them, first or last, has to undergo a severe trial to see whether it shall be subdued, and lose the rankness and coarseness and harshness of its natural flavor, and become perfectly sweetened by the Christ-element that is to be in every one.

This element of conflict is therefore universal, in that it belongs to all. It is universal, also, in that it belongs to every part of our nature —though it is not the same in degree at all times, nor to all persons.

Such spiritual conflicts exist, I have said, in a general and continuous way; but, as in our text, it is recognized that there are special trials, and special times of trial. There are periods when out of joy men come into great "heaviness" and sadness. The whole color of a man's life is frequently determined by some special trial or conflict which he goes through, for days, and for weeks, and for months, and sometimes even for years. And the critical passages of a man's history are not the outward happenings, but the inward, invisible, unjournalized, unspoken, and almost unknown experiences through which the heart passes.

When men are called into the Christian life, they do not come in as experts and veterans. They come in as recruits, to be drilled. And all their campaign lies before them. The victory of our faith is gained step by step; and the great personal epochs in our history are those in which the good principle, after severe conflict, gains ascendency over the evil that is in us.

In order that we may look the more fully into this general truth, I will specialize, and show, not by any means all the conflicts through which men go, but some of the special ones.

1. Men often pass through scenes which thoroughly awaken them to the higher spiritual life. For many persons glide into a religious life, I had almost said, unconsciously. I do not mean that there is not a point of time when men choose, and determine; but the choice is so feeble in some natures, and the gradations are so small, that while they are consciously religious—that is, purposed to live according to the rules of Christ—yet their life is not fairly stirred up. They are like men who, being awaked in the morning before they have finished their sleep, though they are awake and dressed, and though they move about, move as sleep-walkers. And frequently it is the case that there happen to such persons experiences in any of a hundred ways—to some experiences of joy, and to others experiences of sorrow; to some crushing

afflictions, and to others stimulating afflictions; or, not afflictions, but strifes; vehement pressures on the one side and on the other; the introduction of elements that wake up a depressed life in the soul, and bring men out finally into a higher, clearer, stronger light—so that though they could not say that they were not Christians before, they are conscious that they have now come to a level and to a height of spiritual realization which they did not reach in the earlier periods of their lives. And those who have been brought as children, quite young, and without adequate instruction, into the communion of the church; those who have, by the exterior elements and appliances of the church, been held to an outward conformity with the Christian life, frequently come to a period in which their souls are put through a furnace of trial. Sometimes it seems as though they never before had been convinced of sin; as though they had never before really had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And they wake up into a positiveness and clearness of faith. And there frequently is a richness of experience which leads them to say that they were deceived before. But they were not necessarily deceived. For this is the peculiar method by which men are brought to the full disclosures of a Christian life. And though it is the peculiar method, it is more universal, in this respect, than the regular and normal method.

Men frequently progress in religious life as travelers used to on old canals. They ran along upon a lower level, seeing only the valley through which they were passing, and thus came to some lock, in which they rose, step by step, and thus came to a higher level, with a larger outlook, a wider prospect. Along this level they ran for a time until they came to another lock; and in that rose up to the summit level, where they could look over all the country round about, which they had never seen before. At first, though they were advancing, it was upon a low line of progress; but at last they were brought up where they had more extended ranges of vision.

There are experiences which befall men, sometimes by grief and sometimes by moral strifes and struggles, through which they rise from a lower spiritual state to a very much higher, more appreciative and more intense spiritual condition.

2. Men frequently pass through crises in which they are at war with some special element in themselves. There are certain faculties, different in different men, that stand in the way of the development of the Christ-like life. In some it is temper, quick, violent, imperious, cruel, plunging them sometimes into great trouble, and sometimes into an anguish which stands right in the way of a consistent Christian life. There are many who make but very little headway in this conflict until, sometimes by one method, sometimes by another, and sometimes,

perhaps, as a sequence of the very temper itself, they are brought to a sense of their weakness in this respect, and to pain and suffering in consequence of the violations of that unreclaimed and unsubdued passion. And they are not merely in "heaviness," but in bondage and in torment.

The hindering affliction may arise from loss of property, or loss of friends, or loss of respect. It may be some great and trying affliction that men are drawn into by passion. It may come in a hundred forms. But the root of it, and the work that goes on in connection with it, is one which makes sinful or evil a man's imperious and wicked disposition.

There is many and many a man who rages like the demoniac in Gadara, who dwelt among the tombs, and who, when bound with cords and chains, snapped the one and broke the other, and who day and night cried out exceedingly, and cut himself with stones, till he met the exorcising Christ; and then cried out with yet wilder exclamations, until finally he was subdued, and the evil spirit was cast out of him, and he was clothed, and was found sitting in his right mind at the feet of Jesus.

All this process is often blind to those experiencing it. And to other men it seems a great evil. But in the midst of the darkness and swirl of these inward experiences, one of the greatest battles of the soul is being carried on, varying, fluctuating, now gaining ground, and now losing ground, so that at times there is great doubt as to its issue. Yet it is a memorable battle for life and for immortality. There is great "heaviness" and great anguish, for a time, to the sufferers; but this is a trial of their "faith which is more precious than gold." And it is a trial which, if they understand that they are workers together with God, will be a crisis giving them a truer life and a nobler liberty. And though they seem to be broken, they are only broken as flax is broken, that it may become the linen thread, to be wrought into the white raiment of the saints.

3. So, too, for persons who sin by the tongue, there are crises in Christian experience which gather around about that member. For the tongue, though it is the instrument from which come words of prudence and kindness and benevolence, is also an organ that ministers to frivolity and vanity. It is the creature of lies; it is the perpetrator of slanders; it is the propagator of wicked stories; it gives currency to seductive imaginations, whisperings, backbitings, revelings, oaths, and bad influences of every kind. The evil tongue, we are told, is an organ which, like the wild beast, can scarcely be reclaimed or tamed. It is a member which, when it has its freedom, often gives itself to the ministration of lusts and passions. It is the chimney of the soul, and of the lower nature, and is full of soot and blackness.

Now, if men are addicted to the evil of the tongue; if there is a tendency in them to break out and give articulate form to all that is mischievious in their nature, then there must be some way or other of meeting this evil. They are not Christians; or, if they are, there must be a fight. Their victory may be little by little helped by age; it may be helped by one and another modifying influence and circumstance; but more frequently it will go on by a series of conflicts. And oftentimes there is a conflict which is the critical passage of one's whole life; and the temper is trained; and the disposition seems largely to be changed; and the whole of the man's nature seems to have been transformed.

How many men there are whose mouths were once fountains of bitterness, but which after having gone through seasons of great trial and affliction were fountains of sweet waters, and waters of life! How many men there are whose mouths were as the abyss of hell, or as the craters of volcanoes which belch forth lava, but whose tongues afterwards became ministers only of love, and things pure, and true, and gentle, and instructive, as the fruit of a great struggle, and of a great victory!

4. At the same time, and in the same way, every man who is in bondage to selfishness and avarice will, if he be a child of God, get out of that captivity. If he be a child of God, and he will suffer himself to be led gently by the progress, as it were, of the summer of the soul, the word of instruction, in his daily ministration of thought and feeling to himself, will be sufficient. If a man has this avarice, this greed, this selfishness, that shuts him up from his fellows, and leads him to use all the power that inheres in wealth and its relations for his own good, and he be a child of God, there must come a time when it shall be declared whether the Lord reigns, or Mammon. And it must be declared on this very ground, where the man finds it hardest. If it may be treated more mildly, and the work may be completed by the gradual and ordinary process of a divine grace, well and good; but either a man is not a child of God, or there must be afflictions, and there must be a fight on this ground, until every thought and feeling is subdued to Christ. There can be no part of our nature left without its appropriate battle.

How many times do I see this conflict going on in men! And how many know not what God is doing for them and in them! Sometimes God sends his ministrations to us angelically. As Peter was led out of prison by an angel, the doors opening before them, and letting them free into the street, so sometimes God delivers men from bondage by sending to them a messenger of gentleness, of mercy and of love. And as at other times apostles were brought forth in the market-place,

and were mobbed, and scourged, and reviled and threatened, so we are brought forth in our bondage, and are, by the various trials of life, and by the ministration of divine providence, taxed severely, and punished, it seems to us more than we deserve. Oh no; there must be some conflict, and that conflict will have its root, its centre, and its whole life in the purpose of deliverence from our bondage. And although men are frequently desolated as in a moment, and all their life's ambition is smitten, they are infinite gainers.

There is many a man who inordinately seeks prosperity for himself, and whose avarice and selfishness are irreclaimable until, in God's mercy, his prosperity is smitten, and his means are scattered, and he is as other men, and hope departs from him, and he says, at last, in himself, "I give up the idea of being what I always meant to be." Bitter is the struggle, bitter is the humiliation to his pride, bitter is the outcry which his feelings make within him; but after all, the crisis has come. God has humbled him, and he has said within himself, "I give up the ambition; I yield the purpose; I will be content, now, to live and fulfill my duty to my household, and do what good I can to my fellow men, and save my soul."

People say, "Oh! his spirit is broken." Yes, blessed be God, the *evil* spirit in him is broken. His ambition is broken. He is no longer the same fierce man that he was; he is no longer the same restless man; he is no longer the same scheming, calculating man; he is no longer a man that puts such inordinate stress on property and means in this world. He has yielded these. And it is the great victory of his life. It is a victory out of which comes peace and joy in this life, and in the life to come glory and honor and endless happiness.

In great "heaviness" may one well be, if God is trying his faith; if God is, by leading him through conflicts, developing in him a religious life such as is disclosed by the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he has gone through sufferings and trials and crushings, the victory which he has gained is worth more than all this life put together.

5. There is, first or last, also, in every child of God, a conflict of the affections. For our affections are not God-ward, usually. They spread themselves as vines that creep upon the ground. They have to be taught to climb. They are idolatrous. They almost make us worshipers of one thing. They need to be spiritualized. We need to lift up our hearts till they become fixed, not simply on the life that now is, but on the life that is to come. In other words, our affections, bright, sweet, pure, gracious, as they are, even in the natural state, are yet untrained and unchristianized. And though a man, when he is brought into a Christian life, purposes to live for Christ, yet each part of him must go through a discipline to enable him to do it. The dis-

cipline of the affections seems the strongest and the most wonderful: yet there is no discipline that is more essential or more merciful. It is not for the present joyous, but grievous; it seems hard; and yet it is necessary and beneficent.

When birds have hatched their young, the nest is not large enough for them; and they must needs learn to fly. It seems hard for the old bird to shoulder them out, and let them, if they cannot catch upon some branch, fall to the ground, but it is a part of the parental instinct of kindness in the old bird to teach the young bird how to use its wings. The young bird is well fed and cared for, but it is not allowed to remain long in the nest. The nest is good as a place to be born in, but beyond that it is of very little worth. What kind of a bird would that be which never got out of its nest, and never tasted the upper air, and never sung in the forest-top, and never felt the liberty and power of swinging at its own will through the air?

The human heart, made to be larger than this life, needs to be taught how to regard the other life as the real one; and must be taught, in loving, to love in such a way that there shall be immortality and spirituality in its affection; in such a way that its loving shall be not for time, but for eternity. For we tend to love so that the affections do not reach beyond death; so that the grave seems like a pit of despair. Whereas, true love points upward. It gives us, as this world and the present life grow less and less, a larger and larger comprehension of spiritual being and eternity. So that when we have been living for ourselves and for our household, thanking God, to be sure, for our children, and trying to rear them, as best we may, for honor or immortality, and yet after all, loving them as idols, God descends in great mercy, though robed in darkness, and he smites down the pride of the household; he takes the beloved of the cradle; he desolates us. And then is the question between the heart and God; then is the crying; then is the anguish; then are the resistances; then is the darkness; then is the half-resignation; then is the pleading; till by-and by there comes an hour in which the affections say, "Even so, Lord Jesus, reign over us." And through the crisis the heart comes out on the other side, not with less love, but chastened, regulated, spiritualized, subdued to Christ. And when one has come to this experience in his affections, the blessedness of it, the wealth of it here, the promise of it in the life that is to come, is worth every single pang, every single tear and every single groan that it has cost. It is good to be afflicted.

6. Then there are men of dominant pride and of concomitant vanity, who, at some time or other, have to go through a crisis. If the gradual influences and ameliorations of religion do not transform them, then there must come a time when they are to go into conflict. And

this may take place in a thousand ways. God is never at a loss for means. Men go through great and humbling mistakes, and even sins. David did. Solomon did. The prophets did. The apostles themselves were not unimpeachable men. They were frequently left to fall into mistakes. They had imperfections as well as other men; and they had to go through a process of discipline before they were rid of those imperfections. God in his providence brings men into circumstances where they lose their reputation; where they seem to themselves to be cast down from eminence, and to be outcasts; where they are restrained; where their sphere is circumscribed; and where all that has been bright and cheerful to them, is dark and gloomy. Men oftentimes find that all the paths and courses which they have marked out for themselves are closed to them. One finds himself crippled in his ambition. He had marked out for himself the acquisition of means. He had intended to be prospered, it may be, through wealth; but his prospects for wealth are destroyed. Another man meant to be active and efficient in a certain sphere of life; but his health is broken down, or the stroke of maiming and crippling has fallen upon him. Or, one may become blind. There are a thousand ways in which one may be subdued by the providence of God, so that whereas he was filled with strength, and ambition, and boundless purposes of self-aggrandizement, now, as a consequence of circumstances which have befallen him, he finds himself shut up to deprivation and suffering; and the strongest part of his nature seems to be the very one on which the hand of the Lord is laid. And he goes through a great and fiery trial, and a trial sometimes terrific, according to the stubbornness of his disposition. And finally he ceases to resist the divine will.

There is many a man that at last yields his pride to the Lord; yields himself to the providence of God; follows the guidance of the divine hand. And out of this whole conflict comes the purification of his faith, which is more precious than the purification of gold itself.

7. God teaches us what all need, but what so few gain by their own voluntary purpose- -long-suffering patience, gentleness, meekness. How many, so long as they are surrounded by prosperity, live with an unsubdued nature, although they are in many things Christian! For Christians are very much like farms. Usually, at first, settlers clear up and cultivate about ten acres of ground, just around the house. Of the whole hundred and sixty acres, only about ten or twenty acres are redeemed from the wilderness during the first year or two. After that it is customary to cut away five acres or so a year. And gradually the farm becomes subdued. But it is seldom that a farm is redeemed and cultivated alike in all its parts.

So God deals with us. Little by little, and through many degrees,

he clears up the various parts of our nature, and subdues them from the wilderness, and brings them into a cultivated state. But there are unsubdued parts of our nature. And they are to be taught patience, meekness, humility, disinterestedness, kindness and love. And many men that have gone through great trials, wondering what God meant, have, by-and-by, come to a disclosure of the divine intention in that quietness and joyfulness of spirit which is wrought out in them. Men do not at first recognize the benefit which is being conferred upon them by the discipline to which they are subjected in the divine providence. God generally measures his kindness to men, not by what they want, but by what they need; and therefore it is not appreciated by them. If he would give them houses, and lands, and ships, and bonds, and stocks, and money, and other things which they desire, they would say, "Oh! how good God is!" If he would feed their senses, they would feel that he was the most worshipful of Beings. But when he feeds their spirit, and sacrifices their senses thereby, and tries them, and disciplines them, chastening them with stripe upon stripe, taking away the foundation on which they stand, hedging them in on every side, bringing upon them sickness and poverty, casting them out, and making them exiles and strangers, they are apt to say, "It was not always so with me; I have seen better days," and to mourn over their hard lot. How little do men understand those things which have been done in them and upon them in the providence of God to break up the hardness of their nature, and make the soil of the soul mellow—especially where the body is brought under great suffering and affliction, that the spirit may have some chance of life.

These and such like examples are but specimens to show that while there is a general and gradual course of instruction and amelioration, it is a part of the divine plan, as revealed in God's providence, to make onsets on particular parts of men's nature. In view of this disclosure, I would, by way of application, remark, first, that while men are apt to look upon their trials in external relations, God is wont to look upon the inward fruit. We look in one way, and in the lower way of our senses, according to the fashion of this world. God looks with divine understanding from the standpoint of the heavenly land. God, who knows the reality of the internal and invisible; God, who knows what is the value of the soul itself, as separable from the body and its conditions—he loves that in man which is best; and for its sake he chastises him, saying,

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

It is not cruelty; it is kindness. It is not hardness; it is mercy.

I remark, secondly, that no man should fail, in every trouble which comes upon him, to recognize the errand to which God sent it. He sends trouble as a messenger to some, saying, "Humble your pride." If they will not heed the message, he sends other and worse troubles. If you disregard the gentler persuasions of God, you may expect that he will resort to severer measures to secure submission on your part to his will. He says to our absorbed and idolatrous hearts, "That love is too small and too earthy. It has not enough courage in it, nor enough faith in it, nor enough breadth and comprehension in it." If we will listen, we may love on; but if not, often, and often and often the idol is taken away.

Ah! how many men have found heaven by following their children there! How often it is that a man, wretchedly following after his companion, has found heaven by standing on the threshold of it and looking in upon the loved one that he has lost! The brute creation can be toled and allured by taking their young ones and carrying them on before them. And where a heart loves idolatrously, and is to be trained for heaven, and the object loved is taken to heaven, how often does it follow, crying as it goes, as a bird cries out while it follows the boy that has the nest in his hand! How often have men learned at the cradle, what they would not learn at the altar; and at the grave, what they would not in the sanctuary. Take care, when God sends trouble upon you, that you instantly say to yourself, "What means it? What does God seek to accomplish by it? How shall I fall in with this message of my Lord, and become a better man, in consequence of this trouble?"

I remark again, that no man ought to be discouraged because he is in trouble. No man ought to be depressed at the dealing of God with him. In the fourth chapter of the first Epistle of Peter, and the twelfth verse, it is said,

> "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

There are a great many who are discouraged when they begin a Christian life, because they find so much that is bad in them; so much of retrospect; so many times when they seem to be backsliding; so many times when a spiritual coldness overshadows them; so many times when their religious sensibility declines, and when they are brought into states of darkness and of trouble. They feel that they have been deceived, that they have mistaken their own evidences, and that they supposed themselves to be Christians when they were not. My dearly beloved brethren, *whom the Lord loves he*

chastens. If you are brought into trouble and grief, and there is a humbling of your pride and vanity, and a circumscription of your natural appetites; if you find that the world is not so bright to you as it was before, it is God's invitation to you to take the higher life. God is dealing with you, not in punishment, but in great mercy. Beware of suffering that does not bring forth "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Do not say, "How long shall I suffer?" That is not the question. Do not say, "How much ought I to suffer?" That is nothing to you. All that concerns you, is, that suffering shall bring forth the appropriate fruit of spiritual purity, and so of spiritual peace.

When birds are flying over, and the fowler lies in wait for them, if they fly low, at every discharge of the fowler's gun, some fall, some are wounded, and some, swerving sideways, plunge into the thicket and hide themselves. But you will find that immediately after the first discharge of the gun, the flock rise and fly higher; and at the next discharge they rise again, and fly still higher. And not many times has the plunging shot thinned their number, before they take so high a level that it is in vain that the fowler aims at them, because they are above the reach of his shot.

When troubles come upon you, fly higher. And if they still strike you, fly still higher. And by and-by-you will rise so high in the spiritual life, and your affections will be set on things so entirely above, that these troubles shall not be able to touch you. So long as the shot strike you, so long hear the word of God saying to you, "Rise higher."

No man can determine for himself either what afflictions he needs, or what degrees of affliction are best for him. Leave that to the hand of the Lord. Say to him, "Thy will be done—not mine, but thine." Say to the Lord, "May the trial of my faith be to me, as it is to thee, more precious than gold." Lay your heart open, and say with the Psalmist of old, "Search me, try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

This is the life for that work. Not that we are to walk in darkness; not that we are to be overburdened here; not that there is in this world only gloom and discouragement. There is much for enjoyment, much for courage, much for instruction; but there are also the appropriate influences by which the rebellious parts of our nature are subdued; by which the things that are unfruitful are made to bear fruit. God deals with us as with children, when he chastises as much as when he caresses. The hand that bears the rod, and inflicts wounds upon us, and causes us suffering, is the hand that also cares for us and blesses us. If we are to be partakers of the divine inheritance, we must come to it by the way of the Saviour; by the

way of the cross; by dying in the natural man, that we may live in the spiritual man.

Who, then, among us, desire to be saved? Who, that hear me, have been to Christ, saying,, "Lord, grant that we may sit on thy right hand and on thy left hand?" Who of you have been aspiring and longing that God would clothe you royally with Christian experiences? If when you prayed that God would do such and such things for you, you meant that some royal sermon should open some royal vision, and that then you might, in the effulgence of joy, rise up and pluck down all the stars of life, how sadly will you be disappointed! Christ asks every one who desires eminence in the Christian life, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized withal?"

Are you so alive to immortality and glory, are you so in earnest for the salvation of your better self, that you can say to the Lord, knowing that he punishes and that he afflicts, "Smite. Thy will be done. Let me lose, let me suffer, and let thy burden come never so heavily upon me; only let these afflictions be for my purification, setting free all my hidden life, that I may be a man in Christ Jesus?"

Blessed are they who know how to take pains and burdens and crosses, and who see in every single event of life the overruling hand of a Father, and who, in the midst of innumerable afflictions can still look up and say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou eternal God! we desire to draw near to thee this morning, and ask thy help, that by thy Spirit our understandings may be cleansed, and our imaginations inspired; that we may be lifted up above the passions of men; and that we may not liken thee unto ourselves; but that we may find thee in thy purity, in thy truth, in thy justice, and in thy holiness; and that we may come into thy very temple. Though we cannot see thee as thou art, thou canst show us somewhat of thy glory, and manifest thyself to us as thou dost not unto the world. We pray that thou wilt have compassion, this morning, upon our weakness and ignorance, and that thou wilt lift us graciously up into thy presence. As we take our little children, and hold them in our arms, so we beseech of thee that thou wilt do unto our souls this morning, that we may come home and find that God is our Father who art in heaven. Far above earthly dreams, purer, more noble, more full of power and helpfulness therein, more glorious, may we rejoice that the God of all the spheres and all ages is our God and our Father.

We bless thee for the revelation of thyself, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We bless thee for that Spirit which was promised, and which has been sent to thy people to enlighten them; and we pray that all the offices of God toward us in mercy and instruction may be fulfilled this day. Grant us a saving sense of thy presence, and the joy of thy salvation; and may everything that is in us rise up to acclaim thee our God. We confess our unworthiness. We confess our manifold sins, continued through every year of our lives. We confess our proneness thereto. And we pray not only that we may have forgiveness of sins that are past, but that we may be cleansed so that in time to come we may sin no more. We beseech of thee that thou wilt help us to watch against temptation; and may we in the hour of assault be strong, that we may overcome it. We pray that thou wilt deliver every one of us from doubt, from fear, and from uncertainty of mind. Draw near, this morning, to confirm their hope who trust in thee. Inspire those with confidence who are discouraged, and are looking back. We pray that thou wilt strengthen all who are feeble. Comfort all who are sorrowful. Enlighten all who are dim-eyed. Grant that there may be an abundance of thy spirit given to every needy soul this morning. Thou knowest the troubles and trials of each one, and thou hast succor for each one. And we pray that each one may seek for salvation, and learn the way of salvation. Even in the hour of darkness may every one know the way, and find victory in thee.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon those that are prospered, and that come hither this morning with the memory of thy goodness to them. And may their gratitude ascend as incense. And wilt thou accept the offerings which they make.

Grant, we pray thee, that all those who have trouble in their households may be remembered to day. May the God of all grace comfort them.

We pray for those who are in trials and troubles in the midst of their affairs, that they may so carry themselves that their tribulations shall work patience, not only, but virtue and likeness to Christ. We pray for all who are in bereavement; and for all who walk among the sick; and for all who are themselves sick; and for all who are burdened with any manner of trouble.

Thou, O God! art the Saviour. Redeem every one of thy people out of all afflictions. And we pray that we may learn the sacred lesson by which sorrow shall change to joy, and by which loss shall become gain, and by which weakness shall wax strong and be victorious. And out of thy providence minister to our spiritual good, so that we may be equipped and prepared for that life which waits for us just beyond. Grant that we may not

put too high an estimate upon earthly things; that we may not over value them. May we use the world as not abusing it. Strangers and pilgrims we are. We are as they who stop to take flowers and fruits by the wayside, and then rise speedily to travel on their appointed journey. And grant that at last we may have an exceeding abundant entrance ministered to us, when all thy work shall have been fulfilled, into the kingdom of thy glory.

Look with great compassion, this morning, upon thy servants of every name who worship thee. Grant prosperity to all thy Churches. May all thy ministering servants know how to divide the word rightly. May they see their work prospering in the Lord.

We thank thee for all those signs of unity and sympathy among the people which foretoken the latter day glory. We pray that thy people may be guarded as a flock, and that more and more their hearts may find each other, and that thy servants of every name may work together for the suppression of evil, and for the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Pity, we beseech of thee, the nations of the earth. See how many of them are despoiled. Behold the darkness that rests as night upon so many. And take sides for those that struggle for manhood and liberty, and for those that are seeking to dispel their superstition, and to throw off their ignorance. May a great light arise upon them. And wilt thou fulfill thy promises that respect this world. Overturn and overturn, till He whose right it is shall come and reign.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that you wilt teach us, und lead us according to thy love and thy wisdom. And as we overrule the desires of our children for their good; as we circumscribe their freedom; as we teach them by refusing them what they ought not to want, as well as by gratifying them in the things which it is proper for them to want, so do thou with us; and teach us, in all the manifold experiences of life, from day to day, to see the mystery of that which thou art doing. Grant that we may have intimations of the spirit-life and the spirit-land. May there be wafted to us something of the heavenly estate, so that we may see whereunto we are tending; that we may feel the growth in us of that which belongs to the other world; that our life may be hid with Christ in God; that when He who is our Life shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory.

Sanctify to thy servants all thy dealings with them. Draw near to those who have secret affliction which they can speak to none. May they speak it in thine heart. Wilt thou grant that their trials may result in a purification of their faith. Draw near to all who have household afflictions. Be a Counselor and Guide to them in their great trouble. Be near to those who are pressed hard by outward troubles. May they not be unwilling to submit themselves to the hand of the Lord. My they neither lose courage, nor faith, nor enterprise. May they still persevere in things that are right. May they understand why it is that thou hast hedged them up to better manhood. And if they are tempted to sin by sacrificing that which is right, by yielding up their consciences, and by going in the way of the wicked, may

they see their danger obviously before them, and flee for succor to thy higher wisdom and thy higher power.

Deliver all those who stand in youth and in the midst of life and strength, and all who are in old age, according to their several circumstances. As thou art dealing with them, so interpret thy providence and grace unto them, that they may find in thee their life, their joy and their strength; and that living or dying, they may be the Lord's.

And when we shall have passed through this scene of trouble, and shall have shed all the tears which have been appointed for us, and shall have washed our raiment white in blood, then may we appear with thy sons, clothed in white; then may every tear, wiped from our eyes and left behind, be forgotten; and then may joys innocuous spring up, forever blooming, and forever in fruit. And then, in the land of the redeemed, with all our ransomed power, we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

EARTHLY IMMORTALITY.

"And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh."—Heb. XI. 4.

Very little is known of Abel, of whom this is spoken, except that he represented before God the spiritual element, while his brother represented the carnal and the secular. He must have been a man whose moral nature was impressive, mild, gentle. Yet he produced an effect, not only upon his own time, but upon after times. Being dead, he continued to live and speak as though he were present.

This living after a man is gone, may almost be said to be a universal aspiration. Almost all men, when they rise out of the savage state, begin to come under the influence of this ambition.

We are not content, either, with our individual sphere. We desire to be known and felt outside of ourselves, outside of our household, outside of our neighborhood. And our satisfaction grows if we find that our life affects the life of larger communities, and goes out through the nation and through the world. And it is but an extension of the same feeling that leads men to rejoice in the prospect of their being felt, known, spoken of, in after times, and of their influence being experienced even as in their own day.

To a highly poetic nature, it seems as though it were a kind of earthly immortality. One looks forward to it as if he already realized that he should still be alive, and enjoy all that should take place through him, after him, if it might be that he when dead should yet speak. And there are aspects in which this is honorable.

As you go toward animal life, you come to a narrower and narrower sphere, and to an unconsciousness, and to a want of aspiration. The ox, for instance, never seems to desire to be more than an ox. And as you go down, insect life has that kind of base content. It wants to be nothing better and nothing more. But as you rise even among the higher forms of animals, you begin to see the rudiments, as in the dog and in the horse, of a kind of feeling which afterwards, in a man, becomes aspiration. Though we can scarcely say that it is in the brute, yet the sense of ambition, the sense of praise, we seem to

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discern in higher kinds of animals. And in men this element begins where it leaves off in the highest part of the animal kingdom. Then it goes on and purifies itself from lower forms of development, and takes on higher elements, and becomes, finally, one of the noblest inspirations and sentiments of human life. A man who is content to live simply in himself, and for himself, and just through his allotted years, must be considered to be as vulgar as the clod which he treads upon.

The revelation of a future and a more glorious life meets one part of this desire which we have for the extension of our being. We are to live afterwards. Over the bright bridge of Christ's words we walk, now sure that we shall not plunge into a gulf of darkness and forgetfulness at death, but that we shall live again, and live forever.

One naturally clings to the places, the objects, the persons or the race among which he has expended himself. It is not an unnatural thing, nor a thing to be despised, when one lingers where his life has been developed upon earth, with fond longings, and that he distinctly experiences a wish to be felt and known there long after his natural life has ceased. One cannot well bear to think that among his companions, as soon as the services at his funeral are done, he shall be done, and that his name shall not be mentioned again by them. The father and the mother could not well bear to think of dying from the midst of their children, and have those children think nothing of them and care nothing for them. One wants to be felt after he is gone who has been felt during his life.

There is, however, a great difference in men's ambitions for such prolonged life. There is a great difference in the moral values of this longing for extended being and influence. If it be the ambition of vanity; if men desire, while alive, to be felt, in order that they may be praised; if their thought of other persons is simply how to draw from them revenue for themselves, or how they can make themselves idols, and make men believe that they are gods—if it be this, then it is a base and perverted form of that which is a very good thing in its nobler and higher form. And such men are very poor indeed, and contemptible, after death. It is as much as men can do to flatter those who make it their interest to flatter them, while they are alive. After they are gone, men kick over their idols. The world has too much to do to think about fools; and therefore men who spend their lives in imposing themselves on their fellow men, without any real worth, in flattering shams; who live so as to augment themselves by constantly appealing to the self-interests of their fellows—such men, when they die, die thoroughly, die all through, and are forgotten. The world has enough to do to carry on its business, and it cannot carry old rubbish along with it.

This desire to be remembered and loved and felt, is the natural inflection of domestic feeling; and in this sphere it is worthy of more consideration. One may fitly desire to be remembered by those who love him, and whose life has cheered his life. One may very properly desire to be felt long after he is gone, among those to whom he has given his thought, and his experience, and his time, and his property, to make them wiser and better. Love acts at short distances. It is the strongest but the shortest of all levers. Benevolence, though it acts more feebly at near approaches, acts longest. And though the love which we have to our families and to our intimate personal friends is more intense than our general benevolent desire to serve them after they are gone, it is that which we have done for their good—that is, it is our benevolent work and manifestation for them—that will continue to make us precious to them in their memory. We do not so much remember the caress as we do the benefit. We do not so much remember the authority, or the power, or the intensity, as we do that transforming influence which has made us better as well as happier.

The desire to be felt as an *influence* is the only true and noble ambition for this world. It is the desire of genius and enterprise, and it may develop itself in every phase of life—in things physical, social, intellectual, and moral. And its worth is in that order.

Dismissing, then, the vain ambition of distinction, let us consider the power which a man has of prolonging his good influence, and the various channels through which he can do it.

Selfishness, by its own law, not only moves in simple circles, but is short-lived. What men do for themselves is soon expended, and is soon forgotten. Even the monuments which men ostentatiously build for themselves, refuse long to carry their names, and often subject them to contempt, rather than to praise or to memory. Only that part of a man's life which includes other men's good, and especially the public good, is likely to be felt long after he himself is dead.

The physical industries of this world have two relations in them—one to the actor and one to the public. Honest business is more really a contribution to the public than it is to the manager of the business himself. Although it seems to the man, and generally to the community, that the active business man is a self-seeker, and although his motive may be self-aggrandizement, yet, in point of fact, no man ever manages a legitimate business in this life, that he is not doing a thousand fold more for other men than he is trying to do even for himself. For, in the economy of God's providence, every right and well-organized business is a beneficence and not a selfishness. And not less is it so because the merchant, the mechanic, the publisher, the artist, think merely of their own profit. They are in fact working more for others than they are for themselves.

When one so far recognizes this as to walk in a large and generous spirit in the administration of his thousand industries, he in fact is organizing economies which are to go on working long after he has died. That which his business accomplishes, that which his energy has set on foot, will goon working. And the thought—that is, the brain-power—which he has put into his business, does not die when the brain that originated that thought dies. It incarnates itself in the affairs of human life; and the man sends down much of his personality, shrewdness, frugality, economy, wisdom of combination, and fruitfulness of result, in the business which he has established and organized and carried wisely forward.

Who built that mill which clatters night and day under the willows in the valley-road just outside of the village, where on moonlight nights the maid and the youth whisper, and where through the Saturday afternoons the children frolic and play, and where artists go to sketch the scene? Who built that old mill which has ground the bread of two generations? Men do not know. His name may be on some mouldering stone in the graveyard. But it is the man who built it that is working in it still. It was his skill and engineering industry that put it up. And though the hands that made it shall make nothing more, since they have mouldered in the dust, yet the mill which they built has been working for the men of that village ever since its erection.

You may say that building it was a job. Yes, it was a job. You may say that the man who built it got his pay. Yes, he got his pay. You may say that he has had a *quid pro quo*, and has nothing more to do with it. I beg your pardon; no man sets on foot anything that goes on perpetually working for the welfare of the community, that he has not a right in his generous nature to feel that he is identified with them as long as he lives. And whoever builds a good factory or a good shop, whoever puts in motion a clattering town-mill in the midst of a community, is not done with it when he leaves it to do his work. Although he is not an intellectual laborer, although his is not by any means the highest range of activity, although he is a worker in the humbler ranks of life, yet he is working after he is dead in the things in which he has helped society. For although he helped himself a little, he helped society ten thousand times more. And I pity business men who do not recognize the fact that the largest side of their secular business is benevolence. I marvel that men do not sympathize with that side more than they do.

The builders of stores, and warehouses, and shops, and dwellings, are not building them for wages merely. They build them upon contract, to be sure; but their interest in them does not expire with the

fulfillment of that contract. It is not how much these things have done for them that limits their interest in them, but how much they were able, through these things, to make the brain work in the future, and so to incorporate their usefulness into the lower ranges and economies of human life.

Ah! how wisely might men walk through the streets and say, "I have no eloquence and no poetry; I have been obliged to be a humble worker; I am becoming old; these hands refuse the plane and the saw, and this head the planning and the architectural supervision; but I have not lived in vain. There are in this town five hundred houses where scores and scores of virtuous and happy families dwell; and it was my faithfulness that threw those roofs over their heads, and built those walls, and stored those houses with conveniences. I am not known; my name is not whispered; the owners thank nobody but themselves; yet I know that I built those houses, and I know that they will rear virtuous families. I know that as my work has begun, so it will go on, in the blessed service of fostering the institution of the household down through many generations."

And those men who put on shameful roofs, and built tumble-down walls, and covered up bad work with putty and paint, ought to follow these faithful workers, and say, "I have been a tormenter of life; I have cheated all the way through; I have built houses that will go on from generation to generation vexing and harrassing those who occupy them."

And then the contractor ought to condemn himself, who, from extravagance, or for the sake of making a little profit, crowded these builders of poor houses into such a corner that they had to be dishonest and cheat.

But any man who has helped to beautify the city; any man who has helped to make the warehouses noble, the wharves and piers serviceable, and the dwellings enduring and comfortable, has reason to look back with satisfaction on what he has done. He has not written a book; his usefulness is of a lower form: but it is a form in which he may well take pleasure. Any man who has spent an honest life in rearing up the physical economy of society, by which he is to promote the happiness of households, and the industries and frugalities, and so the welfare, of his fellow men, has lived to a good purpose. For the man who is a carpenter, or builder, or architect, or engineer, does not work merely for present remuneration. He puts that in his work which will remunerate him. And I think many a man has looked back from heaven and thanked God that he had a chance to bless mankind by building good houses. And some men have, perhaps, looked back, not from heaven, with remorse, that they built houses that were a curse to mankind.

He whose enterprise develops new sources of wealth in the community; he who gives to the community mines or manufacturing products; he who starts occupations for supplying men's necessities not before known, becomes a lasting benefactor; and he has a right in his own spirit to thank God for permitting him to be a benefactor through these material instruments.

So, not alone are those men benefactors who are warriors, and statesmen, and scholars, and poets. These other men, too, in a humbler way, but really, ought to have a share of our thought and credit. They who promote industry, and make it more prolific of profit, are benefactors.

So inventors preëminently, are benefactors, if they but knew it, and would take a benevolent view of their occupations. They are benefactors who by machinery abbreviate labor, and bring years into days, making hours do what months were required to do, and who not only augment the comfort of men, rendering cheap goods accessible to the poor and needy, but who add to men's power. A tool is but the extension of a man's hand; and a machine is but a complex tool. And he that invents a machine augments the power of a man. And men are as much mightier to-day than they were five hundred years ago, as all the machines of the world make them to be. For the machinery of the globe, after all, is but the manhood of the globe, and represents human power as it has been organized. And he who increases this power by inventing a machine or tool, although he walks frequently unrecognized except as a mere commercialist, although he is called a mechanic, yet, if he be wise, he is a benefactor, and has a right to think so.

Take the sewing-machine. There is many and many a man who has died leaving millions and millions of money, but who has not conferred upon society one tithe of the blessing which has been conferred upon it by Howe. And there will come a day when such men as Watt, and Fulton, and Jacquard, and Stephenson and Ericsson (not born among us, but gladly ours) will be regarded as benefactors. These men will have around about their names more glory than that which mere money could purchase. They will be recognized as having wrought for society; as having used their inventive genius so as to make men stronger, and society more capable, and the ages fuller of profit. These men extended themselves; and being dead, they live. Fulton lives in every boat that by night or by day goes up the North River; in every boat that ploughs the Sound or crosses the sea; in all the steamers that go hither and thither on oceans and lakes and rivers, carrying the commerce of continents. These men who have filled the world with abbreviated industries, and multiplied the wealth and

resources of civilization for the welfare of mankind, are mighty men. Being dead, they speak, in every clattering loom or in every crank that is plied by the machinery which they invented. Where iron is, where wood is, and where all fabrics are—there are they at work.

The old mythologies of Vulcan are outdone, and we have men that are more nearly gods than ever was the vulgar Vulcan.

The man who builds a road through the wilderness, is an unknown benefactor. He is "somebody;" and it is a pity that the name of that somebody was not put where it should be known. It would be a glorious thing to see on a man's tombstone the inscription, "An honest man, who built the road between such and such points." The man who builds a bridge over a stream so that it shall last for generations; the man who shall build the bridge across this great river* on our right hand, is not a worker for himself. He works for every little foot that goes safely over it. He works for every mother that hurries home to her darling children. He works for every poor man who is conveniened by it. Such men work for their own pittance of wages, and they work for the time in which they live; but dying, they shall go on speaking for the benefit of their fellow men.

Oh! that men might know how much benefit there is in mechanical occupations, and in benevolent art! Oh! that men might take comfort in knowing that when they are dead they shall yet speak!

Experience shows that these advances in physical things are more beneficently felt by the poor than by others. They are felt by the rich; but everything that contributes to the convenience and prosperity of the community, and so raises it in the scale, is, first or last, a greater benefit to the poor than to any others.

It is not the selfish or personal element that prolongs one's life. A man that is dead is not to be remembered simply because he invented something. He is to be remembered because that which he invented goes on working benefit after he is dead. And as long as it is doing good to men, so long he is to be remembered. It is that which we do for the public good that makes our physical industries virtuous and beneficent.

Next, men who organize their money into public uses, live as long as the benefaction itself serves the public.

Can you tell me who were the rich men in the time of Queen Elizabeth? Cannot? They puffed themselves up, and walked down the streets, rotund and vain, and were as gods; and there was not a lackey in all London that could not have told you who they were. What has become of those rich men? They are dead and forgotten. But cannot gold embalm a man? Oh no, it cannot do any such thing.

* The East River.

Men can be embalmed; but the trouble is that then they are mummies, and nobody knows or cares who they were. They are good for something. We can use them to boil our teakettle with. The gum and the myrrh and the what not that are used to preserve a mummy, are good to boil our modern teakettle with. But we do not care for those defunct creatures who have gone and left nothing but themselves.

Can you tell me who were the rich men a hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago in New York? What! not any of them? Yes, there were Watts, Leake, and some other names, that I might call, if I had time to search for them. There were a few rich men whose names have come down to us, written on the institutions that they founded. But what about all the rest? What has become of those men that owned the most ships in Boston, in New York, and in Philadelphia? They are gone; and they make just as good dust as poor men do. Their names are like the bubbles which children blow of soapsuds from pipes in summer. All are gone except the men who knew how to organize their wealth into public uses. You shall find here and there a business man, a great saver, a man that had the genius of making and keeping money, and that became over-swollen in wealth, who luckily said, "I will give some millions of this money to the orphans." And so Girard slipped through into immortality, and will be remembered because he took money out of his own pocket and put it into the public veins. He that works for God's great scheme of benevolence shall not be forgotten, and Girard has hitched himself to the work of benefitting mankind, and he cannot be disconnected from it. As long as time shall endure his is a name that men will be interested in. And yet, it was only that lucky final stroke of beneficence that saved him. Had it not been for that, he would now have been ocean-deep in forgetfulness. There have lived multitudes of men that were nearly as rich as he was, but are forgotten. There are multitudes of enormously rich nothings living now in New York, who soon will be pricked by death; and then in a moment they will be gone. When the proper tears have been shed, and the proper services have been hurried over, and the proper pulling and hauling has been gone through with, and the moneys have been distributed, nobody will care for them. What does a thirsty man care for the cloud that brought the water which he drinks? He has got what he wants, and the cloud is gone, and is forgotten. And heirs forget the man by whom money is handed down to them; or they only remember him to curse him for living so long, and worrying out their patience as he did. A man that is a mere muck-rake has nothing in him that men want to remember. I like a fire; but I never thought of praising the coalscuttle in which the

coal was brought to make it. Men like money; but they do not care for those who scrape it together.

If, however, a man organizes his money so that when he is gone that money keeps at work for the best side of human nature, and for the best side of human society, then that man, being dead, though he was rich, yet speaketh.

There is many a man who, having money, says to his right hand, to which the Lord denied the sculptor's art, "Thou shalt carve a statue;" and he takes some poor unfriended artist from the village, and endows him, and sends him to Rome, and brings him back, and puts him into life. Powers and Jackson carve beauteous figures to last for generations; and it is the rich man who patronized them who is working through the men that he fashioned and formed.

There is many a man who says, "Oh tongue! thou art dumb; but thou shalt have tongues that shall speak." And he searches out from among the poor those that are ambitious to learn, and that are likely to become scholars, and puts them forward, and sees that they are educated. And thereafter this worthy minister, this true statesman, that wise and upright lawyer, and this unimpeachable judge, become, as it were, an extension of his own self. There is no way in which a man can use a little capital to a better advantage than in the education of young men and young women. When a man fashions a good schoolmistress or a good nurse; when a man prepares one to be a good almoner and helper of the poor; when a man takes one who is endowed with signal gifts, and gives him a chance to act in life, they, as it were, take something of his individuality. On their way down through life and to immortality they carry him with them. And so the man who would have died if he had only been rich, lives in other men, and has an immortality which distributes itself through the race.

A man has the gift of wealth-amassing; and he says to himself, "Selfish gains will die with me, and be buried with me so far as I am concerned." And he thinks of the village where as a boy he played, and remembers its barrenness from want of taste and from poverty, and says, "I will go back there, and that village shall be made beautiful." And not only does he build there, within moderation, and with taste and beauty, a dwelling; but his house becomes the measure and the mark of all the houses in the neighborhood. It is his fence that set all the people in the village putting their fences right. Before, they did not care how their fences looked; but since this comely fence has been built and kept in good taste, the children every time they come home, say to the old curmudgeon, their father, "How our fence does look!" And they worry him; and the wife teases him; and by and by they get him to put up a pretty fence. And more generous ideas in regard

to houses and grounds are instilled into the minds of the young. And the young men and maidens, when they get married, and settle down in life, exercise better taste in fitting up their homes. Their houses, though small and plain, are more tastefully planned; and there are more trees about their grounds, and more flowers in their gardens. There springs up on every side an imitation of that rich man's example. And in the course of twenty or twenty-five years he will have regenerated the taste of the community.

Or, he goes beyond that. He inspires in all the neighborhood a disposition for beauty by planting trees along the highway. He says, "There lies between me and the next village a long stretch where the wind blows remorselessly in winter, and where the sun pours down its heat on the weary, over-spent traveler in summer; I will line those five miles of road with generous elms, and will pay the expense." And he lives to see the time when, reaching across the road, these elms meet at the top. And he rides many times through the long, green colonade which he himself has made. And when he shall have been dead a hundred years, he will be remembered as the man who made that long walk of beauty.

Oh! that I could remember and write the names of the men that planted the old elms in Hadley, and Hatfield, and Springfield, in Massachusetts, and in all the Connecticut river towns, where so much beauty was so cheaply purchashed for generations and generations! I am amazed to see how men live—men that have power to open the cornucopia, as it were, and pour down abundance on the times to come, at almost no expense, and that yet live twenty or thirty years in a town, and leave it at the end of that time as ragged and squalid as it was at first.

I rode from Warwick to Kenilworth Castle—a long distance—under columnar trees; and I looked up and blessed God for those ancestors who planted this magnificent drive. And I have wished that all men, not only in New England, but in America, might know what beauty, what refreshment, what refinement and gladness there is in this most simple method of decorating one's village and one's neighborhood, or the roads from village to village. For they who bless their fellow men by such benefactions, become almoners of taste and distributors of comfort. And *being dead they yet speak.* It may be that they do not speak their own names; but they speak happiness and satisfaction. And there is not a man so poor that he cannot set out a tree.

There are young men here who never heard such things put into a sermon before; but you will never forget that you heard them to-day. There are young men here who are going to be rich; and let me tell

you—and you will never forget this—that you must not be rich for yourselves alone, but that you must organize your riches so as to make other folks happy if you want to be remembered. Do this, and as long as the world stands you will never be forgotten. And if you want to know what to do, let me tell you to commence doing something to-morrow. A man that is going to do good with his money when he shall have got a great deal of it, makes a bargain with the devil; and the devil outwits him. Where men are going to use their money so that it will do good when they get through with it, the Lord is apt to get through with them before they think of being through with their money. If you want to be benevolent by and by, be benevolent now. Form the habit of being benevolent by giving at least a little of your means for benevolent purposes as you go along. It is not a bad rule to lay down, for every man to say to himself, "I will spend for other people one-tenth of the clear income that I receive." It is not a mere professional saying. I tell you, if you give away a portion of the profits of your business for the benefit of others, it will sanctify the rest. It will bring a moral element into your life. Say to yourself, "I will give one-tenth part of my receipts, whether those receipts are large or small; and it shall go for the good of others, and not of myself." Wherever you are, and whatever circumstances you are in, do something that shall go on benefitting men after you are dead, if it is only to plant a tree or a bush to beautify a house or enhance the comfort of travelers. Do not be contented with simply helping your own self.

How much more is this true of those who lay out parks for the masses, and provide such magnificent breathing places for our cities! I cannot enough express my gratitude for the men who laid out what will be the two most splendid parks, I think, that will exist on earth, when they are completed, and when they shall have grown to their full proportions—the Central Park in New York, and the Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Mr. Olmsted might very well rest with this epitaph: "He was the Superintendent of the two great parks." For it is not simply what they are that is to measure his usefulness, but what they will do in leading to the laying out of other parks in cities that are ambitious of distinction. No Boston, no Philadelphia, no Cincinnati, no Chicago, no city of importance, can afford to have a park less excellent than those of New York and Brooklyn. And blessed are the men who have labored to put forward these great benefactions of the public, which hold up to the eyes of the poor and needy so much beauty, and bring them into such sweet commerce with God in nature, and give them such resting places and such bounties for their leisure days. And cursed be they whose base selfishness hinders the plentitude of this bounty.

Not only may wealth be organized into institutions of secular pleasure and comfort and beauty, but it may be organized still more potently into institutions of mercy—into houses of refuge; into retreats for the unfortunate; into hospitals for the sick; into orphan asylums; into houses of industry and of employment. These forms of mercy, these eleëmosynary organizations, follow society. As the Commissions followed the army, and picked up the wounded and the dying and the overspent, and ministered to them, so these great public charities follow in the wake of human life, and pick up those that are weak and wounded and perishing. And their mercy can scarcely be estimated. There ought to be, not fewer, but more of them. They do not attain to the first rank; but attempting to bind up the wounds that are made, is second only to preventing the making of wounds. No man in his life-time, and no man in his individual experience, can feel or do what he can organize his money to feel or do. If you had countless wealth, and all the poor in Brooklyn should make procession by your house, and you should give them bountifully of your store, you could not do by your alms anything like the good that you would if you should build a hospital or some other charitable institution which would go on benefitting the poor long after you were dead. You will die in a score of years, perhaps; but not a score of centuries need slay the institution which you have reared. Your personal sympathy will reach but a little way; but here is the sympathy of this organized wealth which will go on dealing with generations, and generations, and generations; and it will be just as fresh a thousand years hence, unwearied and unspent, as it was the hour when it was established.

Oh! what a benefaction for any man that has money, and has faith to see how it can work after he is gone, and a heart to set it to work! Being dead, he speaks, and speaks chorally.

But even more important are those institutions which go before society, march ahead, as it were, and, by distributing intelligence and promoting virtue, prevent suffering. The institution which prevents crime and vice and suffering, is more beneficent than that which attempts to remedy them after they have happened. Therefore all those institutions which stimulate and develop important truths for the world cannot be over-estimated. There are a great many of them. In this class are the premiums, endowments, prizes. Take, for instance, that single foundation, the Bampton Lectures. A New England man, dying, left a fund the income of which every year was to be devoted to paying for a course of lectures which were to vindicate the authenticity of the Scriptures, and the divinity of our Lord, and the evangelical religion. From that fund there has sprung a line of lectures that constitutes one of the most noble monuments of learning and piety

that has been known in any language on the globe. Could money be made to work such important results in any other way? A man that shall endow a prize in any line of science, in any line of invention, in any line of the vindication of truths, puts his money where it will work as a perpetual lever and stimulus; and no man can estimate the power and the value of it.

Then there are those institutions which diffuse knowledge, such as libraries and reading-rooms. And yet, brethren, I think these are in their infancy. We have but the germ of what I hope will ere long exist. We must have these institutions removed from places of dissipation and temptation, and must endow them amply, and must take the stiffness from them, so that they shall be homes useable and familiar. Look at the Free Reading Room of the city of Boston. I mention it because it is connected with one of the noblest libraries in one of the most magnificent buildings in any city, and because it is sumptuously provided, and is open freely to every man, no matter how poor, who chooses to avail himself of its privileges, either of reading books there, or taking them to his house to read. It is a free-will offering, and is welcome to the poorest of the poor, clear down to the bottom of society, as well as to the rich.

Now, when Christianity makes a gift to the poor, it cannot afford to pick off the meanest products of the tree, and say to them, "You are poor, and you can eat this worm-eaten fruit." When Christianity gives to the poor, it is bound to give them the best it has. Therefore, when you build missions for the poor, build them better than your own churches. When you open reading-rooms for the poor, make them more sumptuous than the reading-rooms which you open for yourselves and your children. Be more generous to the poor than you are to yourselves. That is the spirit of Christianity. Be more kind to them than you are to yourselves. That is the true inspiration of Christianity. And when men shall understand this, and begin to endow missions and reading-rooms for the poor—magnificently endow them, so that they will go on working hundreds and hundreds of years—they can afford to rest from their labor and go to heaven; for being dead they shall speak in the things they have done, and carry comfort and encouragement and relaxation and knowledge to those who most need them. A man might well place before him in life this single ambition, "I will make myself so well off that I shall have enough to build a kind of home for the poor, so that when my family shall be scattered, there shall be gathered a larger family whom I have blessed." Oh! how poor the vision of a life of pleasure seems in comparison and contrast with these munificent and noble ways of life!

So, men that establish academies, and colleges, and universities, live

forever, and live, too, in a way that an angel might be proud to live. They that established Harvard—who, even with heavenly arithmetic, can compute what their money has done since they have gone home? Is not the name of Yale familiar to every intelligent man on the continent because he endowed the College at New Haven? And men will yet carry down to thousands of years hence that great name. And Cornell's name is rescued already, as, also, is Vassar's, and Drew's, and Astor's, that would not have sounded far down in the future if they had not had an inspiration which taught them to found seminaries for the discovery and propagation of knowledge among the masses of men.

These endowments have in them immortality on earth. This is the reason why I say that men ought not to be poor if they can be rich. There is a power in wealth, when it is guarded by benevolence, which no man has a right to despise. Having such a sword as that with which to slay ignorance, no man ought to refuse to draw it from its sheath. Gain wealth, and then endow institutions. That is the way to use wealth to a good purpose.

We may rise to a higher grade, and to a more familiar ground therefore, since it is more frequently inculcated in the pulpit. As virtue and spirituality are higher than physical qualities; as the wealth of society lies more in the goodness of Christian institutions and Christian men than in ease, or abundance, or pleasure; so he most wisely prolongs his life to after-days who so lives as to give form and perpetuity to spiritual influences. Whoever makes the simple virtues more honorable and attractive among men, prolongs his own life.

The evil of untruth I need not expound to you. He who makes truth beautiful to men in his day; he who makes men want to be true, and seek after truth, and believe in it, becomes a benefactor. So that I think one single character in Walter Scott's novels is worth more than all the characters put together of many more fashionable novels. For, after all is said and done, if all the novels of the globe were burned but that, I think we should have enough yet. There is Jeanie Deans, who, standing in court, had it in her power, apparently, to clear her sister of disgrace and death by simple vacillation; by simple prevarication; by giving up the truth; and not even the love of her father, who seemed about to die before her eyes, nor the love of the sister of her bosom, could make her swerve. She must tell the truth, though it slew her and every other one. And I think there is more heroic power in that simple character in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," than in many a moral treatise, and many a system of moral philosophy. She, to the end of the world, will make telling the truth seem more noble and heroic, and so will make men nobler and more heroic. He who stands in the midst of dangers with every temptation to be a coward, but who is so

true that calmly he sacrifices his life to fidelity, makes the simple virtue of fidelity so beautiful and heroic that he lives still in the vitality which he has given to that moral element.

I would that the heroic deeds of noble black men were recorded. How many dusky faces went down in our war without a name! When, in the extreme South, a boat containing a party of our men, had stuck on the shoals, and they were obliged to lie down to escape the showers of balls that were flying in every direction, a stout black man said, "Somebody must be hit to get dis yer boat out of danger," and sprung overboard, and put his shoulder to the gunnel, and shoved her off; and while the party escaped, he, pierced, fell into the stream, and died. He knew what he risked; but he said, in his soul, "Here are these my friends. They must all perish, or some one must take the risk. I take it." Such a name ought not to perish. Such an example ought not to be forgotten—and all the more because it is the example of a man in lowly circumstances. It lifts up the heroism of self-sacrifice, and makes it better worth one's while to be a man, and makes life more noble and more radiant, and corrects that unbelief in moral qualities which is the bane and curse of the world.

Whoever suffers for a truth, whoever endures heroically for a virtue, not only saves his own name, but gives a force and a perpetuity to humble virtues that will open men's hearts to them, and will make their empire beautiful and potential.

All who have opened the divine nature to men; all who have developed to men higher moral truths, and made them like their daily bread; all who have lifted the life of the world up into a higher sphere —they, although dead, yet speak. They may not be spoken of; but, what is more to the point, they themselves speak, and speak the same language; and all the better, because when a man is dead the prejudices and the imperfections that lingered about him are dead, too. And then his voice becomes clearer, and his testimony is more widely received. Men will listen to the truth that dead men speak who would not listen to the same truth spoken by them when they were alive. Speak on, then. And if, in the midst of reproach and contumely, you are bearing witness to nobler truths, and the men that you live among will not hear you, take courage from the assurance that there will come a time when men will open their ears to you. And if you give your life to the generation in which you live, all the more powerful will be your testimony; and being dead you will preach and teach yet.

Lastly, those who have the gift of embodying moral truths and noble experiences (which are the best truths that ever dawn on the the world) in verse; those who have the power to give their higher thoughts and feelings the wings of poetry—they, being dead, speak

far back. We hear Homer chanting yet, and chanting the best things that men knew in his day. And the world is still willing to listen to the oldest poet. Going further down, in the majestic numbers of the Hebrew Testament we find the most sublime truths of God and of destiny in poetic forms; and the world is never weary of listening to them. They reappear in every form of translation. They are as fresh to-day as they were on the day they were uttered. And since that time, in every nation, bards have sprung up. And there have been singers for the devil as well as for God; the name of the wicked shall rot; and the fame of wicked men, that has for a little time had its bad currency, sinks more and more away, and becomes the slime and the sediment of the ever-rolling stream of life. But the voice of men who speak for love and purity and immortality, grows sweeter and clearer with time. And he who has had permission to write one genuine hymn, to send forth one noble sonnet, to sing one stately epic, may well fold his wings and his hands, and say, "Now let thy servant depart in peace."

What are you doing, my brother? What are you doing, my sister? Young man, what do you propose? Will you build pyramids of stone, or will you build pyramids of thought? Will you live to make yourself a little happier for a few years than otherwise you would have been; or, will you forget yourself, remembering the sublime meaning of the Master's words, *He that will save his life shall lose it?* He that seeks present ease, present power and present wealth, without regard to the welfare of men, shall lose everything that he strives for, and his own name shall be forgotten. *He that will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* He that puts his life into doing good; he that would purify men; he that would suffer for the sake of suffering men; he that puts the enginery of feeling and the power of business into the work of beneficence in this world, though he may be subject to obloquy, though he may be under a cloud, though he may lose himself, will be remembered when he is dead. The time will come when his name will shine out brighter than the morning star.

May God give you wisdom, not vainly to sit and wish that you might be known in after times, but to understand that he who makes his life an instrument for promoting the happiness of others, being dead, shall yet speak. He shall rise to immortality, and to the society of just men made perfect, and of God, the Judge of all. And there, through an endless life, he shall yet speak joy, and shout praise, and be as the angels of God forevermore.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We adore and bless thee, our Father. Far above us art thou. Thou art beyond our comprehension. Thy nature transcends all that we know, or can know, in goodness, in wisdom, and in power. Nor can we understand the conditions of thy being, since we cannot go beyond our own. But we rejoice that thou art more, so that when we see thee as thou art, face to face, we shall not be disappointed, but shall be satisfied. Filled with the utmost imagination of excellence, and beauty and majesty, thou art still more sublime than all our thought of thee, or than any thing that we can think. We rejoice that we shall find thee more full of graciousness, and more wonderful in love, and in that sphere of perfected life which shall work that which it is not given in the winter of this life to do. In all plentitude and power, it shall become then the law, and the fruit thereof shall be a blessedness which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. We desire to walk by faith of that blessed land, and of that glorious and final vision of God. We desire to live as seeing him who is invisible. We desire to live though our senses do not help us. We desire to take the inspirations of our heart, the intuitions of our moral nature; and we desire by thee to be led far above ourselves, or above men, or above anything we can know of thee. And though by searching we can not find thee out unto perfection, we can find out enough for love, and joy, and trust, and hope, and gratitude.

And now, we beseech of thee, O Lord our God, pour thyself in upon thy children to-day. There are those here who know themselves to be thine. Their hearts cry out for God. Their spontaneous nature unuttered, is, Our Father. By this token they know of their adoption. And we beseech of thee that they may have the witness of the Spirit in them to-day, and that they may rejoice in this heirship. All things are theirs. Thou art theirs. And with thee they are heirs to an eternal inheritance. Thy providence, thy grace, thy wisdom, and thy goodness, surround them here. Thou dost guide them. Thou dost succor them in temptation. Thou dost comfort them in sorrow. Thou art tender and gracious to them in infirmities. And even their sins are not set down against them. Thou dost forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin. And we thank thee that thus they are walled about by thy goodness. They are borne as in the Lord's chariot of love. And they shall finally be saved. For thou hast overcome death and Satan. And the power of darkness and the power of light shall not be able to prevail against thee and thine own.

And now, Lord, we pray that this may be a day of joy among thy people. May they confess their sins, knowing that thou art willing to forgive him that confesses thy mercies to him, and rejoice with thanksgiving and gratitude. We pray that their hearts may be ready to-day to call up from the past the memories of all thy mercies, long extended. How many hast thou spared in hours of critical danger! How many have seemed to themselves under the impending cloud whose bolt was about to descend upon their head! and thou didst cause the storm to pass by; and they were rescued, and did not fall down under the blasting stroke. How many have been sick, and have been rescued from the grave! How many little prayers and importunities are answered! How often has the goodness of God been vindicated in the exigencies of past experience! Who of us has not cause to recognize thy sovereign mercy? May thy people to-day, with humility and with thanksgiving, be grateful to thee, and pour out their hearts before thee. We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the families that are represented in this congregation. Help thy servants to minister in holy things in their households, to walk before their children blameless, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We pray that

thy kingdom may come, and thy will be done everywhere, in the households of our congregation.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt strengthen thy servants, and prepare them for thy will and for thy work. And we pray that thou wilt bless those who go forth to teach; and may they themselves be qualified by thy Spirit for blessed teaching.

Bless thy cause in every form, and in all places. Bless assemblies of thy people of every name. Wilt thou unite thy Churches more cordially in sympathy and in love. While men differ in things remote and outward, may they more and more be joined in inward experiences—in faith, and love, and holy hope, of the Gospel of Christ.

We pray that thou wilt bless the nations of the earth. Bless our own nation. Purge it from iniquity. Deliver it from evil laws and evil rulers. Destroy selfishness. Prevent avarice from breaking over all bounds. Grant that thy kingdom may come in the hearts of this great people; that they may serve the Lord, and love their fellow men, and purify themselves from evil works, and be an acceptable people unto God. And may all the nations that in their weakness are struggling for their birthright be helped of thee. May darkness flee away; may superstition cease; may wisdom prevail; may liberty, and purity, and true Christian manliness everywhere abound; and may thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Which we ask for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless us with the light of the truth, and with the knowledge of thy word. And grant, we pray thee, that they may temper our desires, and restrain our selfish passions, and inspire our generous sentiments. Lead us to plan, in this life, not for ourselves, but through ourselves for others; so that we may have a larger life—a life which death cannot touch; which age cannot impair; on which weakness shall have no power; which clouds cannot conceal nor storms blight. So may we learn the great art of building that we shall build beyond the reach and touch of time; that we shall build for immortality. And then, where neither death nor weakness shall come any more, in thine own heavenly kingdom, may we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

MERCHANT-CLERKS OF OUR CITIES.

"Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thy heart in the way. Be not among wine-bibbers: among riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding".—PROV. XXIII. 19–23.

That human nature is substantially the same in every age and in every nation, might be inferred from what we know of the human mind itself; for the variations are only in details. The real forms of passion and appetite and affection and sentiment are the same everywhere, with or without culture.

It is, however, still more strikingly shown in that the descriptions of temptation were given thousands and thousands of years ago; and the warnings which were uttered against special and peculiar dangers, are just as well fitted to our age as they were to the age in which they were uttered.

The peculiar sins to which commercial communities are liable, are just as real in New York, and in the great cities of our land, as they were in the trading communities on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, in the days of King Solomon. The warnings that were given, three thousand years ago in Jerusalem, to young men, have just as much freshness and applicability now, in American States, on a continent which was not then dreamed of. Human nature is substantially the same in all ages, as regards its temptations, its perils and its rescue.

Great cities are peculiarly thronged with the young. They abound in solicitations to evil. They have also many privileges and advantages for good. They have a strong social impulse in them to which the young are peculiarly susceptible. They provide a certain secrecy, too, which is congenial to erring courses—especially in their beginnings. At home, in one-streeted villages, where every house is glass, as it were, and every neighbor knows altogether too much of every other neighbor, it is difficult for men to go in by and forbidden paths without observation; but a great city is at once a great garden of poisonous as well as wholesome fruit. It is, also, by its very multitudinousness, by the vast numbers of separated circles, and by the impos-

SUNDAY EVENING, June 12, 1870. LESSON: PROV. II. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1321, 564, 889.

sibility of men's taking cognizance of their fellow men, a kind of shield which men put between them and observation. And so, men are shielded, in great communities, from the self-condemnation which they would experience if they were in solitary places, or in smaller communities, inasmuch as they find class-surroundings. There is a certain public sentiment in every line of good conduct, and in every line of bad. Whatever men do that is perverse, they need but little time to find out that there are other men doing the same thing. The greatness of the population enables each particular class to gather to itself its own elect. And aside from the stimulus which they give directly to each other, by community of evil, there is this incidental influence derived from it, that it shields men from the condemnation of their own moral sense, and in some sort makes apologies and excuses respectable, or semi-respectable.

I might speak of the influences which conspire, in these cities, to undermine the virtue of the young—especially their truth and honesty. I might speak of the influences which tend to pervert the normal forces of industry, and which teach men to seek success and prosperity by crooked, abbreviated, gambling ways. These are dangers instant, pressing, vehement. They are connected, also, more or less intimately, with the prime danger of which I shall speak in a moment. But they require, each of them, severally, a sermon. I shall, therefore, confine myself, to-night, to the single theme of convivial pleasures and their dangers.

As we are not, naturally, a nation of gluttons; as gluttony is but an occasional or accidental evil, I shall confine myself mainly to the dangers that betide young business men in this great city (for I regard Brooklyn and New York as substantially one) from strong drink. I wish, to-night, to speak to the clerks of this city, on the prevailing drinking usages, and the dangers which threaten them from strong drink.

It is perilous to leave home at just the time when a great majority of young men do. They come down to New York to seek their fortune. It is just at that time when a transition has been made, but has scarcely become confirmed, from youth to early manhood. They are in the strength and exhilaration of hopefulness. They are full of eager ambition. They are impelled by the full force of their ripening passions. It is a time which is full of amiableness, full of beauty, full of courage, full of trust in honor, full of endeavor, and full of other tendencies by which these nobler traits may be easily perverted. It is a time when one needs not so much the hand of obvious authority, which the young are apt to rebel against, as that invisible and more kindly restraint which comes from influence; from social surroundings; from

that most wholesome of influences, home-influence. But the young are early sent abroad, if they are prospered in life—at fifteen, if not earlier; or are sent into commercial life, if they are in limited circumstances. Young men come to New York to commence business when they are but fourteen or fifteen years of age. At just the time when they need both father and mother, they lose them both. At just the time when they need kindly influence exerted upon them from day to day, they find themselves their own masters, without any one to whom they can go for advice. In ten thousand instances they are surrounded by those who prefer to give them bad advice. They are left to themselves in the most perilous circumstances; under the most pernicious temptations; amidst wiles, and seductions, and blandishments, and blinding influences. You can scarcely place a young man in a situation more perilous, at fifteen, than that in which he is placed in the city of New York, where he has none that care for him; where he has no refuge; where he has no supply for the natural and normal developments of his affections and taste.

This leads me to speak, next, of the surroundings of the young who come hither. They live in a state which is peculiarly unfavorable to self-restraint. The conformation of the city of New York is adverse to virtue, I think. A round city may so mingle homes and stores that business men can more easily step to their own houses for their meals than elsewhere; but in a long and straggling city like New York, where men live three and five miles from their business, so that a journey must be performed every time they go home, it is indispensable that they should take their meals in whole or in part at eating-houses. And, as if to make it completely bad, thousands and thousands sleep in the shop and in the store, out of all the warm and fresh and genial influences of home. During the most susceptible period of youth, they find themselves sleeping on the counter at night, without a virtuous friend near them, or with only their young associates. And the table at which they eat might as well be spread in Broadway, so far as privacy or any resemblance to their home-table, is concerned.

I do not say that the young ought not to brace up, and that it is not becoming in them, and to be expected of them, that they shall adapt themselves to their circumstances, and prove their manhood and integrity in the midst of adverse influences; but in every score of men there are nine or ten who are weak, who need to be helped, whose life will fail if it is not crutched up, and who are largely dependent upon their social surroundings for what they are.

Thus the young, in coming to New York, find themselves not only homeless, but placed in social circumstances which peculiarly tend to demoralize them, in the incipient stages of demoralization.

They are soon brought to the question of company. It is desolate, after the labor of the day, for a man to have nowhere to go; especially a young man that is homesick—and I hope that every young man is. I do not like to hear a man say that he never has been homesick. It indicates a kind of hardness which I do not envy, and would not cherish. Where a young man is tired, and has nothing to do, and has no pleasant bed room even, and no society, and is alone in a store that has become, after weeks and months, odious to him, how natural it is that he should seek company! And if he can find it nowhere else, he will seek it on the street, or in places of amusement. And what such society is, I need not tell you. I blame it, and I pity it.

It may be well, and it may be a duty, for us to rebuke all such misconduct as springs from these sources; but not without letting it be understood that we appreciate the weakness of men, and that we see that there is great stress brought to bear upon them. And how heavy, under such circumstances, hangs Sunday! What is Sunday here to those who have been accustomed to go to church in the country, where they knew everybody, and where they were known by everybody, and were greeted on going in, and greeted on coming out? By way of experiment they set out, of a Sunday morning, for church, not knowing where they will go. They follow the bulk of the people, and go into a stately edifice, where there is worship, but no fellowship. The next Sunday, they go into another church, where there is instruction, but no atmosphere of love. The next Sunday, they go into still another church, where there is an abundant provision of seats, but a slender occupancy of them, and where all is cold and empty. So they try one Sunday here, and another there. And this wandering about on Sundays from church to church is about as poor a business as a man can go into, so far as profit is concerned. A blacksmith might as well take his iron to one forge, and let it heat five minutes, and then take it to another forge, and let it heat about the same length of time, and then take it to another. He would be as likely to get his iron hot as a man would, by going on such voyages of curiosity, to raise his spiritual fervor, or to begin a life that would have continuity in religious impulse and religious knowledge. But the necessity of their circumstances drives them to this. And they wander up and down. Now they go to the Roman Church, to see the unaccustomed "pomp," as it is called—the gewgaw ceremony. Now they go to the ritualistic church. The papers are full of comments concerning that church, and they go to *see*. Now they go to the Presbyterian Church, to which they are drawn, it may be, by a thousand joyful associations; but the man in the pulpit is strange, and the people are strange. And the "respectable" habits of our "respectable" churches do not win the young, unfortunately. A man

may go into many and many a church door and stand wistful, and no man will care for his soul. No devout sexton is there to say to him, "Sit here or stand there till the pew-holders are served, and then you shall be provided for." No hospitable mother, no wistful father, who has a son in some distant city, looks out, and, seeing the young waiting, calls them in, and, with paternal benediction and kindness, cherishes them, and makes them feel at home. In many a church one might walk up and down all the aisles on the ground floor, and make the circuit of the gallery, and go forth, and excite no other thought or feeling than the wish that such noisy young men would stay at home. Our cities are good for many things, and in many respects they answer the purpose for which they were established; but unquestionably there is a want of warmth in them. There is a want of welcome for the stranger. There is a want of fellowship to make them feel at home when they come hither.

So our young man, sleeping on the counter in the corner of his store, or at his boarding house, is cut off from healthful social intercourse, and from wholesome religious associations. All is very well at his boarding house, it may be. He is fed. Why yes; and so are his father's pigs. So are his father's calves. So is the stalled ox. So is the horse that cracks his corn and chews his oats. At boarding houses young men are fed; but, too often, they are fed as though they were but so many crunching animals. And after their meals they go to their rooms, and are alone; and there is nobody to care for them.

Oh! the desolateness of a man's heart in a great city, where he knows nobody, and nobody knows him! I know what it is. Old as I was, settled as my principles and character were, the oppression of London, when I walked the streets a stranger there, and the oppression of the continental cities, was almost more than I could bear. And it did me good; for I said to myself, "I never will be so careless again, when I return home, in regard to strangers in a strange place, now that I know what is in their hearts."

I do not withhold blame from the young, but I pity them, where they are thrown out of the warm bosom of home into the cold and cheerless life of a city; where there are none to care for them; none to associate with them; none to quicken their virtue; none to fill them, every day, with new aspiration; none to draw them, by genial influences, to refinement and love.

Very soon, under such circumstances, young men are brought to the question of pleasureable indulgence. This is, as I have said, at the transition period of their life, which is always a dangerous period, but which, under the artificial conditions of such a life, is peculiarly trying.

Multitudes have virtues, or principles, or habits, which shield them

Some are so fortunate as to live with relations, or to fall into pleasant families. And let me say that sometimes there are mothers in boarding houses. I mean that sometimes there are persons in them who take care of those who belong to their households. I have known widowed women (to their honor be it spoken) who were as much concerned for the young men under their care as if they had been their own sons, and who watched over them, and counseled them, and sought to take the place of a mother to them. They are worthy of all praise. And I am far from wishing indiscriminately to blame those who keep boarding houses. I desire, rather, to recognize and appreciate the services of those among them who render valuable service to virtue and manhood. And I do not doubt that in the last day, among the band of faithful mothers and friends, there will not be a few of those who stand in the humble relation of mere providers and mere economists in social life, whose heads will blossom with the glow of love and kindness.

A yet larger number than are shielded by homes or some kindly fortune in the city, are left to themselves; and all the solicitations of pleasure come upon them. All the wiles, all the seductions, and all the enervating influences of social life befall them.

See, now, how all these things bear on the drinking habits of the young—particularly upon young men in commercial life. Desolateness and loneliness tend to drinking. Men who have nothing to do, and nowhere to go, always, for some strange reason, want to drink. And the tendency of drinking is to blunt a man's nerves; to subdue the exquisite sensibility of his nature; to take off the edge of his spirits. There may be a raising of the animal tone of his system; but the effect is to make him less sensitive to circumstances that otherwise would acuminate him. They that are alone, and feel their loneliness, are tempted to resort to drinking. And all the more because drinking-saloons are as wise as churches ought to be. They make no provision for the higher nature, to be sure; but they provide for the lower nature with a wisdom which is worthy of a better cause. These places are easy of access, and brilliantly lighted. The instruments of destruction which they contain are hidden by the judicious screen at the window and at the door. There is chamber within chamber, into which the unwary victim is drawn, step by step. There are all manner of familiar decorations which take the gauntness and barrenness from the eye. And there is plenty of company. The lower nature is thus provided for with great skill. And here young men who find themselves in their bedroom or store alone and lonesome, over-spent and fainting, cannot resist the temptation, notwithstanding the protest of conscience, which says, "What would your mother say, and what would your pious sister say, if they knew where you are to night?" They turn off

these warnings of the monitor within, by saying, "Hang it! I don't care. I am having a good time; and it is the first good time I have ever had since I came to New York. It is ever so much better than last Sunday night. Then I went to church, and almost froze to death. To-night I went to a cheerful drinking-saloon, and thawed out; and I feel a great deal more a man; and I do not believe that such places are as bad as folks say they are." There is in lonesomeness great temptation to drink. There is in solitariness great temptation to seek society in dangerous places. And the remedy for lonesomeness and isolation is not *bad* company, but *good* company. If a man has a purpose to break out, and break through, and find some heart that shall warm his, and some society that shall beguile his leisure, he can find it; and they who are careless and heedless take the first that comes, whether it be good or bad.

One is tempted, also, to be ashamed of morality and of rigid temperance, at this period of life, and especially under the circumstances by which he finds himself surrounded. For there are not a few who make haste to show him that he has become a man, and is to put away childish things; that he must not be over-scrupulous about truth and honesty; that he must not have too rigid notions of honor; that there are certain permissions and self-indulgences which belong to city life. He finds himself surrounded by an atmosphere which rather chills his heroic notions of morality. He discovers that self-restraint and temperance are not fashionable. He is very soon made to feel that he must stand upon his guard if he would maintain his ground. He sees that those who hold views such as he has been accustomed to hold are considered as fanatical, straight-laced. He sees that if the standard of morals to which they have adhered is correct, the example which he sees around about him is pernicious and relaxing to the integrity of his nature. And yet, he is liable to be carried away by that example.

We are creatures of example, not only in the sense that we are imitators, but in the sense that the tendency to imitate is the result of a latent feeling of aspiration or shame. It shows itself as much, and frequently more, in lower ways of life than in higher.

A young man in business in New York has risen until he has a salery of a thousand, or fifteen hundred, or two thousand dollars, and he can take his dinner at Delmonico's, or some other first-class restaurant; and he feels his self-respect rising when he finds that his employer dines there too. And it warms his heart to have this great man speak to him, and say, "How is it with you, my dear fellow?" Nothing does him so much good as the touch of that man's hand. But his employer drinks wine, and he does not.

I once saw at table two members of a great firm, both of whom

were Christian men, nominally, and I hope really, notwithstanding appearances; and with them sat two clergymen—one of the Episcopal Church, and one of the Methodist Church—one then, though not now, the editor of a prominent religious church journal, and the other a preacher in full orders. And I counted five kinds of wine that they had before them. Here were four Christian gentlemen—two clergymen and two members of an eminent firm, enjoying a most admirable dinner, which was well washed down, I assure you! And there were young men that sat looking at them and envying them. Young men envy those who drink wine, though they think they do not. It is probable that not one young man in a hundred likes the taste of wine. I think it is an affectation for men to say that it tastes good. They tell you it does, but the face that they make when they drink it gives the lie to their profession. Have you never seen men drink brandy, scowling as they drank it, not because they relished it, but because others drank?

This young man, eating his plain, frugal dinner, has human nature in him; and as he dines on his mutton-chop, with his tumbler of water, and sees this successful business man and that rich hardware merchant, this dry-goods prince and that eminent book publisher, this renowned broker and that great railroad manager, have their different kinds of wine, and perhaps something stronger to prevent the wine from souring on their stomach, it has its influence on him—and all the more when he finds that his companions, one, two and three, who are above him, are following the example of these men, and say, "Of course, a man ought to have self-control, and not be a guzzler, a wine-bibber; but a man who pledges himself not to drink has no credit for not drinking. A man who drinks moderately is not intemperate. Besides we ought to use the things which God has given us."

If you will show me one drop of wine which God made, I will drink it, and will recommend you to drink it. Wine, as God makes it, is in the form of grapes, and is harmless. But the young man says to himself, "This wine which these men take must be a good thing; and why should not I take it?" And he makes up his mind that to-morrow he will order a pint of claret. And, sure enough, when he takes his dinner the next day, against his habits and his taste, he orders his pint of claret. He never drank a pint of claret in his life before, and he is ashamed to put in the cork and have a part of it kept for his next meal; and he does not like to pay for it and not drink it. So, on the principle that a man is bound to eat everything that is on his plate, he takes it all down. And the following day he orders another pint of claret. And at last he gets so that he can drink a pint of claret without any great difficulty; and then he looks around the restaurant with

an air of triumph, feeling that he has taken a step that is conformable to his condition and circumstances and means. At first, when he drank his claret, he felt a strange swimming in his head. You that are older may not remember, but a pint of claret is a good deal for a man who is unaccustomed to drinking wine to take without feeling dizzy. And he went back to his store—what? a drunkard? Oh no. A ruined man? No; not that, at all. He simply had taken the step that separated him from a clearly defined, sure position, to take his chances in the realm of uncertainty. He had gone off from a firm rock on to shifting sand. And very likely he may escape, and become a sound man—particularly if he is not genial; particularly if he is selfish; particularly if he has a temperament that is a little cold and phlegmatic. Cold temperaments are less disorganized and less injured by drinking than mercurial, genial, sympathetic temperaments. He that is most susceptible to the influences about him, and that is quickest to form attachments, and that has the most elements in him which make other men love him—he it is that is most readily destroyed by drink. Intoxicating liquors are most apt to take hold of those who are most precious, and to let alone those who are least so. It assails those who are warmest and most loveable in their natures, and passes by those that are cold and heartless. It kills those that we desire to have live, and lets live those that we wish would die. Those that we can afford to spare do not go, and those that we cannot afford to spare go quick.

Then, there are other influences which conspire to make young men drink. There is the fascination which literature has thrown around drink. It has come to be the impression that drinking is the almost indispensable means of a certain kind of hilarity and social enjoyment. It is supposed that men who drink are always social; but it is not so.

I was very much struck with the drinking habits of Scotland. I came, one night, at about eleven o'clock, to a hotel in the town of Ayr. There are no parlors in the hotels there, and the guests sit in what is called the *commercial* room, which is the same as the dining room in this country. In that room sat twelve or fifteen men. I saw a waiter bring in what was apparently the customary service of the evening. I do not mean the Bible and a hymn book; but a decanter of whiskey, and a pitcher of hot water, and what I should say was a cream ladle, and some glasses. Several gentlemen, I noticed, had cut up a *London Times* and divided it between them, as though it were a loaf of bread—for papers are so dear there that a man cannot afford a whole one, as he can here in America, where papers are cheap. They poured the whiskey and the hot water into a big tumbler, and mixed them, and then took the ladle and dipped the mixture into glasses. And the men each took a glass and commenced sipping. But not a man said a word.

Nobody looked at me. There was perfect stillness. They sat sipping, sipping, sipping, till they had drank all their whiskey and hot water. Then each one got up and went to bed by himself. I saw that men could drink and not be social. Nevertheless, we all know that when men set out to be social, drink is one of the things which they mean to use as fuel to kindle the spirits and get up hilarity upon.

And then, there are drinking songs, intemperance songs, discoursing of the delights of wine. There are two or three temperance songs; but my impression is that we had better let these alone. There have been various attempts to put the praises of cold water into literature; but cold water is ten thousand times better and more sparkling than any poetry that was ever written concerning it. Literature, however, is full of drinking songs, with wit and mirth and conviviality in them. There have been four thousand years of invention in this kind of literature. These songs fascinate the imagination of young men. I never read of the old falernian wines that I do not wish that I could see them. I never read of the rare wines of Italy, or any other country, that I am not conscious of a sort of longing to know more about them. They do not touch our pragmatical men perhaps; but there is not a man who is genial and imaginative, who has a smack of sentiment, and who has a literary turn, that these things do not affect him, and tend to bring his higher feelings to the side of drinking. And they act a great deal more upon the young than we are accustomed to estimate.

Then social customs come in. When young men that are rising in the world are brought along about so far, they are invited to the houses of their employers, and to the houses of their companions' employers. And far be it from me to throw contempt upon this. If there is a necessity that respectable parents should fish for their daughters, there is an apparent propriety in their inviting to their houses proper company for those daughters, that they may be enabled to make the most judicious selections in their behalf. Therefore, when the rich banker is to give his monthly or quarterly convivial entertainment, he invites (without any ulterior design, but with a religious trust in Providence!) his promising confidential clerk. And one and another of the good-looking, and well-organized, and more fortunate, and more prosperous of the young men that have come under his notice, are invited. And they have no pride that resents it. On the contrary, they cannot repress the pleasure which they feel. It runs out of their eyes and overflows their face—especially when they are telling you that they do not care anything about it. They are invited there, and it does flatter them. They have no words that are adequate to express the delight which it affords them.

And then comes the stress of temptation; for they have not the

what to wear. Alas! for that manhood which is more concerned about external appearance than internal worth! A young man that is honest and steady and self-respecting begins to be conscious that he has in him executive power, and that he ought not to be beholden to any one; that he ought in his pride to be beholden only to himself. And remember that it is in no man's power to honor you. You yourself are the only one by whom you can be honored. If you have the substantial qualities of a man, you have no need that anybody should make you a man. Those who are made men by other people's invitations, are rather homunculi than men. Still, human nature is human nature, and we must take it as we find it.

The young man provides himself with clothes, such as he thinks the occasion demands, but which he can ill afford; and on the appointed night he goes to his employer's. And he is treated with more than fatherly kindness by the host, who takes him by the hand, and says, "I am exceedingly happy to see you at my house, and shall be happy to see you here at any time."

He does not dare to set his young face against the habits of this man's household; he cannot think of doing anything which shall be a rebuke to others present; and when the festivities come round, and the supper is served, and wine is offered to him, he dares not refuse, but drinks, and drinks again. And having drank once, it is easier for him to be persuaded to drink again. So he drinks at other social festivities. And before the year rolls around, all idea of restraint has passed from his mind. Thus one barrier after another is broken down, until all barriers are gone.

There are many who are not the recipients of such invitations; but other influences are brought to bear upon them which produce the same result. For there are a few who have no companionship; who are not members of clubs; who are not invited to balls or dinners; who do not go on excursions; who are not placed where they are expected to be men among men, and do as others do.

Then there is a pernicious practice which I am not familiar with, and therefore do not know how to describe, but which I am told is increasing in New York—the practice among business men of treating each other in connection with their bargain-making. I am assured that if the business men of Broadway and Wall Street would simply set their faces against drinking, or asking men to drink, in business hours, it would be effectually done away. I am advised by parents of young business men, that one of the severest ordeals through which they are passing is the constant solicitation to drink during the hours of business. And it is not surprising that young men who have gone through a career such as that of which I have been speaking, should fall into the custom of drinking at such times.

Then comes the next step of attempting to rally and recuperate, after excessive labor and exhaustion, by the power of drink. When young men have been in business all day, and have been up all night, and have repeated it twice in forty-eight hours, usually they feel a *goneness*, as though there was nothing left in them; and as their duties remain, as their business has to be carried on, as they must be in their places and perform their labor as usual, they betake themselves to strong drink, or to mixtures of it, to reinvigorate their strength; and they say that they cannot get along without it. I have only this to say: If a man will not sleep nights, and performs excessive office-work during the day, he will bring his nervous system to a point where it cannot rally without stimulants. But the mischief lies in the dissipation. The mischief lies in the intemperance in the use of his hours.

Sleep nights! Make it a matter of life and death with yourself, that no twenty-four hours shall go over your head without having its full compliment of seven or eight hours of fair and square sleep. There is many a cup that would stand undrained if men would fill themselves up with good, honest sleep. If men would not do more than belongs, in ordinary circumstances, to a reasonable use of themselves during the hours of business, the temptations to rally their flagging powers by means of stimulants would be very few.

There is one special evil of which I wish to speak, and that is where men begin their work by the use of stimulants. If there is anything which marks the ends of the preparatory career, if there is any point at which you may say that a man is a drunkard, it is where he is obliged to study under the influence of stimulants; it is where he needs brandy when he is going to make a speech; it is where he wants a glass of liquor when he goes to his business in the morning; it is where he works on the steam which is raised by intoxicating drinks. When a man has come to that point, and indulgence is regular with him, he is a drunkard, though he never staggered in his life. He is a drunkard who depends on intoxicating drinks for the means of rallying or building up the strength which he needs for the carrying on of his daily avocations. And there are multitudes that do this.

When men have come to this point, some of them may be reclaimed. Here and there is one that fortunately may change his residence and his circumstances, and come into more wholesome relations. Some may wake up to a consciousness of their danger; but I fear that of every ten that have come to this condition eight will go on and die of drunkenness, or of those diseases which will at the same time cut short both drinking and life.

Now, under all these manifold temptations of the young, ought not every young man who hears me to ask himself, if he has begun to touch

and tamper with intoxicating drinks, "Am I safe?" I know that many young men, when warned on this subject, say, "Others may have perished from an excessive indulgence in stimulating drinks; but then, I am not such a fool as they were." No man has any guarantee of safety who has once taken the first step in the path of intemperance. It is not probable that any of the young men who have stumbled with fatal downfall believed that they were going to stumble. The probability is that every one of them said to himself, if not to others, that though drinking might be dangerous for some men it was safe for him. But it is safe for no one. The voice of Prudence says, "Pass by it; touch it not; taste it not; handle it not." One thing is certain—you are not safe if you begin the habit of taking it. You are perfectly safe if you do not touch it.

I do not say that every man who drinks is going to become a drunkard. I do not say that the man who takes wine every day with his dinner is going to die a drunkard. But I do say that, taking the young men in New York as they go, the whole mighty swarm of them, intemperate habits are fraught with so many dangers that we are perfectly sure that there will be a decimation of them from this cause. Probably one out of every ten (there may be more than that, but I do not wish to exaggerate in my statements) will be destroyed. It is unquestionably the case that of those who begin life with dissipation, a large proportion will be seriously injured, and a certain number will be utterly ruined, while all are in great peril.

Now, there is no need of any such sacrifice of young men. There is no use of their placing themselves in such imminent danger. There is a course that is free from peril. There is no hazard in a way of absolute temperance. He who does not touch nor taste nor handle intoxicating drinks, certainly will not die a drunkard. But he who does touch, taste and handle spirituous liquors, and who becomes familiar with them, and begins to make them work night and day for him, though he may not become a drunkard, is on the downward road where drunkards have traveled in countless armies; and there is reason enough why we should warn him.

The most ambitious and excitable of men in the community are those who come down to do business in New York. It is not the sluggard or the dullard of the family that is sent out to seek his fortune. It is the young man who shows himself, in his native village, a little quicker and a little more sagacious than his companions, and who begins to feel that he wants a larger sphere than that of the village store in which to exercise his powers. They are the picked young men that come to New York. They are the most promising young men.

Therefore the loss of these young men is more or less a loss to the

country. There could be nothing more important to the welfare of the country than a statistical tabulation of the young men who have come to the city during the last ten years, and have been employed in stores and shops and offices, giving a history of their career, and especially recording the prodigious number of those who have been destroyed by dissipation. It would be a sermon of warning that would save multitudes of young men.

But this work of destruction is going on silently. Many young men, when they come into the poison air of these cities, come to die. They are struck with death almost as soon as they breathe it.

Many a young man finds his way to the house of the strange woman, which is way of death, and a way from which few if any return. One man after another fails in health, and goes into the country, where he can be under cheerful and invigorating influences, and he grows feebler and feebler, and finally dies in some remote hamlet. Few know the nature of his disease; but the physician's prescriptions show what it was. "Stabbed dead by the deceptive, assassinating hand of pleasure in the city of New York," should be put on his tombstone. "Drunkenness slew him," should be the record.

Thousands, every year, are perishing. You know them. Where is the young man that was in the store next to yours? Where is the young man that was turned out of your store? What has become of the young men that you have known during the last five or ten years in business? Call them to mind. How many have failed in health? How many have died from diseases contracted in the city? How many have found it prudent to go to sea? Ask yourself the reason of such a fearful decimation of the young men of your acquaintance. I tell you, that in nine cases out of ten, dishonesty and intemperance and illicit pleasure have destroyed them. They have been debauched and ruined by permissable indulgences. And yet, there is not a human life that we can afford to lose. We cannot afford to lose the life of any young man on this continent.

If the Capitol had taken fire and burned down, the whole nation would feel that it was a great loss. If the Astor Library should take fire, and all the books should be burned, it would be considered a public calamity. If the *Louvre* in Paris, containing all those rich specimens, which represent the various schools of art there, all those magnificent works of the best masters of ancient and modern time, were to perish, the whole world would feel that it was a most unfortunate occurrence. But I tell you, there is more to be deplored in the perishing of one single soul than in the perishing of all the pictures, and all the books, and all the buildings on the globe. A building you can rebuild, but a man that is lost you cannot restore. Being once lost, he is lost forever.

While, then, I give this solemn charge to all those who are directly or indirectly under my care, I also urge you who are yourselves concerned in business, to take care of the young men within your reach. I do not ask you to put over them a rigid censorship; I do not ask you to become spies; but I do say that a common view even of Christianity should make us more solicitous for the young men that come down to New York, and that are in our business houses, than we are accustomed to be. You may say, "I cannot be responsible for the hundred, or fifty, or twenty young clerks in my house." I do not put it on that ground. I only say, You have a hundred, fifty, twenty, ten, or five young men in your employ, who once lay in their mothers' arms, as you once lay in the arms of your mother; they were baptized in the sanctuary, as you were; they are beloved; they are the centre of pride and ambition; they have in them hope for the future; and God puts them, like a little congregation, under your charge; and you are their chief; and they look up to you. And I do say that you cannot answer at the bar of God who have the care of young men, if you have no sympathy for them, and never ask what are their habits, and never seek to ameliorate their condition, by diminishing their temptations, and directing their tendencies to virtue and to piety. We cannot wash our hands of this responsibility. And though every young man should take care of himself, yet every Christian and every citizen should take care of every young man.

One of the most touching incidents that ever came under my notice was one that occurred here in Brooklyn during the war. I was called to visit a young man who was sick. He had been in the army, and had been sent North to a hospital; but he had been taken into one of our respectable and well-to-do families. They desired me to go and pray with him and console him; and I did. He died in their house, and was buried from it. He was, as I learned, no relation of theirs. "How came you," I asked them, "to be interested in him?" "We found him," they replied, "in a hospital in Brooklyn." What led you to take him to your house? "Well," said the mother, "our only boy went into the war in Missouri, and was wounded; and some Christian family in St. Louis took him home with them, and cared for him, and he died in their house; and when I went into the hospital, this young man looked like my boy, and I remembered what they had done for my boy, and I took him, and I brought him to my house, and have taken care of him." She did it because others had taken care of her boy in a distant city.

Ah! are there any of you whose children have been struck by the destroyer? and will not you rescue other men's children when you think of the anguish of your own soul? Have you had sons that have gone

out into the world, and that you have followed with unutterable longings and yearnings? and will you forget that there is a father's and a mother's heart that longs and yearns for every young man in your employ?

Is there anything that God will so thank you for as saving his little ones? Is there anything in this world that will make it so terrible to meet the eye of your Judge, as, rising, to see those who were under your charge, and who perished through your neglect, and who shall be witnesses of your unfaithfulness in the day of judgment?

I charge you, citizens of New York and Brooklyn, take care of the young. Shield them from those temptations which are mightier than their inexperience. And I say to every young man, Listen to the word of God:

"Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the Lord give to thee wisdom and understanding."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We desire to return our thanks to thee, our Heavenly Father, for the mercies of this day—for its rest; for its seclusion; for its sanctuary; for the light, the knowledge, and the joy which have brightened it. We rejoice in the communion of the saints, and in a holy fellowship one with another. And while our lives mingle together in earthly joys, we rejoice that there are higher joys aspiring, pointing heavenward; and that we are joined not alone in toil, and care, and earthly fellowship, but in faith, and hope, and the sure joy and fruition of thy spiritual kingdom.

Grant unto us, this evening, that we may draw near to thee with apprehension, with clear discernment, and with hearts of gratitude, to confess our sins. May we not be unwilling to make mention of thy goodness. May we feel ourselves moved to rejoice, and to seek thy presence, and to make known all our wants for the future, not as though thou wert ignorant, but because thou hast made it pleasant to plead with thee. Grant that we may have a spirit of prayer, and a spirit of holy confidence. May we trust in our God. And we pray that thou wilt buoy us up by this trust, so that we may go through the alloted experiences of life, able to baffle and overthrow our adversaries; able to resist and overcome temptations; able to discern and avoid all snares that are set for our feet; able to do battle valiantly for the Lord our God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all that are in thy presence, according to all their varied circumstances. Their inward and outward wants are before thee, most merciful and most gracious God. Forgive unto every one his transgressions. Help each one to restore his soul, and to come back from the things in which he has wandered to the straight and narrow path. Grant unto every one that strength by which he may be able to bear the duty of each day. May none yield themselves to fear, or to discouragement, or to despair. May all be strong in the Lord.

May the sense of thy gracious providence surround each one. May all each day feel that there are others thinking of them besides themselves. May they know that there is a guiding Hand; that when darkness comes, still within that darkness is thy love and thy provident care. And we beseech of thee that sorrows, and chastisements, and crosses, and burdens, may be to every one of us messengers of the Lord.

And we pray that thou wilt grant that thy servants may be able to discharge their duties faithfully, bear the burden and heat of the day, and be good soldiers equipped for the service of their Lord and Master. And may we not be slothful nor sleep. May we be watchful, waiting for the coming of the Lord, knowing not in what hour he may come. May we have our loins girt about, and our lamps always trimmed and burning; for it will not be long for many of us. We are all coming near to the hour of our departure. One and another go, and we are made to see how uncertain life is.

O Lord our God! grant that we may be prepared in life, by the duties of it, so that when death shall come to us, it may not be unwelcome, nor even a surprise, but a joy and a gladness.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all classes and conditions of men. We pray for the poor, for the outcast; for the neglected; for those that dwell in unillumined ignorance; for those for whom there is no sanctuary; for those who are trained in evil, and whose surroundings tend toward wickedness.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember those who are seeking to carry out the Gospel into the highways and byways. May they be more and more filled with the Spirit of the Master; and more and more may they see the labor of the Lord prospering in their hand.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember all for whom our prayers are desired. Succor those who are in peril. Draw near to all that are in trouble. Grant that the sick may be restored, or prepared for their change. Grant that all who need thee may feel thee moving toward them, and quickening them by thy Spirit, and comforting them by thy Grace. We are all traveling homeward. May we have every day the comfort of knowing that we are one day nearer to our rest. And grant, we pray thee, that when we have fulfilled our journey, strangers and pilgrims as we are, and when we draw near to the celestial city, we may find that we are known there, that we are waited for, that our names are recorded, and that there are messengers sent forth to bring us home.

And to thy name shall be the praise of our Salvation, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou bless us in the word spoken. Grant that it may be a warning, an incitement to rectitude, and a dissuasion from vices and temptations. We pray that thou wilt take care of the young, unsheltered as they are; swept upon by so many storms; so watched for by insidious and cunning men; so sought with blandishments and snares by wicked women. Grant, O Lord! that they may have raised up around about them those that shall be friends indeed to them, that shall hold up their fainting faith in virtue, and shall save them in the hour of temptation.

Grant, we pray thee, that those who have stepped aside from the path of rectitude may not be discouraged nor ashamed to return. May all those who have had the beginnings of wrong in them, now arise and shake off the evil. And with all hope, and faith, and courage, and with prayer to the

God of their father and mother, may they begin over again. And counting the past as indeed gone, may they begin life anew. And may none be discouraged because the way back is a hard way. How much harder must the way become as time goes on! O Lord! succor all those who fain would hold fast their integrity, and stand steadfast unto the end.

And we pray, O God! that thou wilt bless all associations of young men for young men, and all those who are seeking to shield the virtue of society, and all that labor for the reformation of morals. Grant, we pray thee, that thy kingdom may come, and that thy will may be done, and the whole earth be filled with thy glory. Which we ask for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

THE MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another."—Rom. II. 13–15.

The question which the apostle was obliged to argue in the opening of this epistle, was largely the condition of the Gentile or the heathen world. He argues both sides of it. He argues, as you will find in the first chapter, that they were to be condemned on substantially moral grounds; and he also argues that they may yet, nevertheless, be condemned in much less measure than the Jews—a peculiarly offensive turn to the argument; because the Jew held that he had a right to superiority, to prominence, before God, on account of the essential relationship of God to him, and to all that concerned him, no matter how he lived. The fact that men were not Jews settled the matter. They might be just, they might be virtuous, they might be devout: but they were not Jews. They did not believe in Jewish creeds nor worship in the Jewish circle; and that was enough.

The apostle, therefore, is obliged often and most offensively, to go against this bitter, this stupid bigotry of the Jews, which has not died out with the Jews' authority. And here he is arguing that the Gentile nation may, after all, stand better before God than the Jews do. "It is not they that *hear* the law that are the safest," he says, "but they that *do* the law." "Ah!" it is said, "the Gentiles never had it, and of course they did not do it." "But," he says to his objector, "nevertheless, if they do those things under the light of nature which the law commands you to do; if they, by the light that they have, reach the same virtues, the same moralities, the same devout tendencies, which you reach through the law, they shall, under the law that God has revealed in the heart, have some sense of what is right and what is wrong. If they keep that unwritten law: if they serve according to the light which they have, that shall suffice. If you, with

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the law, sin, and they sin without it, they will stand, for that very reason, higher than you do. And if you, with the law, disobey it, and they, without the law, obey it, they will stand better in the divine favor than you."

This question, historically considered, was local. It was not without its interest to the Jew, and to every thoughtful mind that was then present. But the apostle settles it upon a ground which makes it universal. It draws very deep in matters of moral government and of character. For, you will observe that the apostle here takes ground with the moral constitution of man as a thing of nature created in him; that man has in himself, not as a full revelation, but in a rudimentary and organic form, an interpreting nature, by which he knows what is right and what is wrong; by which he accuses or excuses his conduct, as he goes to the right or to the left in any line. He declares the fact, with authority, that men receive a revelation, not for the sake of creating in them a moral sense, but simply for the sake of guiding a moral sense that is already created. He declares, substantially, not that religion is a thing superinduced upon the constitution of man, but that it is the right unfolding of that constitution. A revelation is made in part of things not known before; but, for the most part, it is the expounding, it is the commentary, which God makes on the elements which were in man's nature when he was created. There is a moral constitution of souls. There is a right and there is a wrong; and aside from the determination of them which we get from authoritative Scripture, they may be determined by reason of the harmony of the soul's powers, by the law of development, and by the relative precedence which that law, unfolding, establishes.

Let us, then, follow this line out, and look at some of the truths which belong to it, and see if they are not important, and deep, and very solemn.

1. The essential truths of religion (and none more than those of the Gospel—of Christianity) are natural, constitutional, organic. They have their elements in man's own nature. They were not first created when they were declared by inspired men to the world. Inspired men, declaring the truth of God, simply expounded and interpreted that which had already been made known in the very creation of man —in his very nature. A mental philosophy does not create mind. Mind was created before you could make a mental philosophy. The law of conscience did not create conscience. Conscience was created before there could be a law of conscience. A revealed law only brings out into words and into clear declarations that which lay hidden in the nature of conscience. The whole moral constitution is not a thing which is imposed on us by commands *ab extra*. It inheres in man.

It *is* man. It is the fundamental nature of the human soul.

Any great fundamental truth which you find in the Bible, if you take it by analysis, and carry it back, you will find grounds itself, at last, on natural law. It may not be so of many of the incidental and instrumental explanations of the Bible; for the Bible carries something more than mere fundamental truths. The ordinances and forms of worship may not be traced back to nature; but all those great truths which involve the nature of right and wrong, of inferiority and superiority, of submission, of obligation—all that goes to constitute what we call *moral sense*—every truth which partakes of that nature, has, you will find, a foundation in the nature of things.

Moral consciousness, and all that belongs to moral consciousness, is a part of science. Men oftentimes speak about a revealed truth; and there is much that has been made known which would not have been known if it had not been revealed; but, after all, the fundamental elements of truth, in so far as they relate to man's nature and obligation, are not revealed except in the sense that creation is a revelation. They are provided in man's nature. And if he only had the wisdom to know what he was; if he only had the scientific knowledge to know how to unfold his moral constitution, every man would work from his own moral consciousness to substantially the same ground which is open to him in Scripture. So that, when I preach the Gospel, particularly in its relations to duty and obligation, I feel strong, not only because I believe him that bore witness—because I believe the word of God—but because, tracing the word back, I find it written again in you. I find it to be true when I take either direction. Going out and looking into life, and seeing what men are, what they do, what they suffer, what they want and what is possible, I come to precisely the same results as when I look into the sacred record. Studying man as I do, and studying the word of God, I find the two are respectively witnesses of each other, and both together are stronger than either alone. And all the way through, you shall find the word of God appealing to this consciousness of men, appealing to their reason, appealing to their judgment, appealing to their feelings, to bear witness to the essential truth of that which is stated in the word of God.

Even, then, if men doubt the Church, or creeds, they will not get rid of that which all churches mean and preach, or should endeavor to mean and preach, and which all creeds should endeavor to include. No man has got rid of religion, because he has got rid of the popular expositions of religion, or because he has got rid of the written Book. For religion did not begin in the Book. The Bible is, as it were, the geography of religion, the grammar of religion, the guide-book of religion, and not the source of it, nor the authority for it.

2. On the other hand, a right minded man, if he had no revelation, but had power to keep his mind clear and sensitive, and his conduct in harmony with his higher nature (I am making a supposition, and not declaring a fact), would go up on to the plane of the Gospel. If a man were capable of reading the law of his own being, understanding his own organs and the functions of them, and then following out the indications that exist in himself, he would be brought up to the substantial ground of the Christian religion—that of reading the law which is written in himself. The two are one. Whichever way you start, going from the one in one way, and from the other in another way, the roads meet, and have a common testimony.

Hence, the Gospel is not a super-addition to nature. It is the opening of nature. It is the development of nature. It is the blossom of that which all men alike possess, and which belongs to the race.

You should bear in mind that, unfortunately, the term *nature* is used in two senses. It is used by theologians mostly to signify man's corrupt state. I use it, however, to signify, for the most part, that condition which God first intended. Not that which man has come to by perversion, and use, and habit, and character, but that line of development which was marked out in the decree and plan of God, is what I consider to be *nature*. And if every man had followed out that nature, he would have been brought substantially from his own moral consciousness and experience up to the grounds of the Gospel of Christ.

3. From this fundamental view, it will appear that right and wrong in human conduct, in the main, are not conventional; that they are not things of mere custom; that they are not on the same ground that manners and ordinary social customs are. There are a thousand things in life which may be changed. They are different in different nations. What is valid in one, is not always valid in another. What is regarded as just in one, is sometimes not regarded as equitable in another. Obligations change, and modes of government change; but fundamental principles do not change. The great fundamental principles of right and wrong, as they are interpreted of God—truth, justice, purity, and love; or in other words, comprehensively, holiness—these are the same in every age. It makes no difference how much men may philosophize about them. There is an inherent nature of the soul, and it is the parallel of the body itself. For, though there are a thousand medical systems, or laws of the body and laws of health, sickness and recovery remain just what they are, as facts, no matter what men's theories are. A man may have any theory he pleases of digestion, but digestion has a theory of its own, and does what it pleases. A man may speculate as much as he pleases about his head;

he may believe that there is a brain in it, or that there is nothing in it; but his belief makes no difference with the facts. They remain as they are. If one should say, "A man could live just as well without eating as with,"—could he? If one should say, "That man has been led by the nose by these superstitious doctors who say that he must sleep five or six hours a day; but I tell you that if he would assert his independence he would not need to sleep at all, and he might just as well as not have the whole twenty-four hours to himself,"—could he? Is sleep a part of the doctor's getting up? Are eating and drinking a part of the doctor's superstition? If a man, talking of bones, says, "A man's bones are whalebones, and, if he only would, he might use them as such,"—could he? Try it. Dash your foot against a stone, and see If a man says, "If you only thought so, it makes no difference about your conduct," well, think so, and put your hand on a fire-log, and see whether it makes no difference. The great facts of the body—the brain, the chest, the trunk, the limbs, the bones, the ligaments, the nerves, the blood, every part—these do not stand in men's notions; they stand in God Almighty's decrees; and they are what they are in spite of you; and they will laugh you to scorn if you attempt to modify them, or traverse them.

Now, the soul has a definite moral constitution, and the faculties of the human mind are clearly coördinated to work well in some directions, and to work ill in other directions; and men may say, "Among so many sects, among so many ministers, and among so many doctrines, nobody can tell what to believe; all is superstition; and I am going to do just what I please." Well, do as you please; but reason has its own law, conscience has its own law, and all the affections have their own laws; and if you use yourself in one way, you will experience more and more joy and peace and communion with God; whereas, if you use yourself in another way, your experience will be that of growing darkness, of growing discontent, and multiplying conflicts; and your whole soul will be turned into a criminal court, and every faculty will be arraigned as a culprit, and brought up for judgment and condemned; and you will be of all men most miserable. You have a law in your moral nature just as much as in your physical nature; and a man's believing or disbelieving has nothing to do with the facts. The consequences are determined from that original creative act which made you organically, and in God's decree, what you are in your intellectual and moral state.

As, then, a man must observe what he is, and must obey the laws of nature, if he would be healthy and strong and happy in bodily things; so it is with religious things. You cannot set aside religion because you do not like it. It does not come by the priests, although

they meddle with it, and sometimes mar it. Nor does it come by the church. The church does not create it. Nor does it come by the Bible. The Bible followed after the moral constitution of man, instead of preceding it.

4. Men are not released from obligations to virtue and religion simply by keeping away from the church, and from preaching, and from the various vexatious intrusions of other men's consciences. There are many who think that if they shut out disturbing truths they will have rest. No, there will be no rest for them. The word of God comes as your friend, to help you, by giving you the state of facts; but if you throw the facts away, you simply throw the help away.

A man lies sick, and sends for his physician. On talking with the patient, and forming his judgment of his case, the physician prescribes such and such remedies to be taken, and forbids him to use such and such articles of food, and obliges him to remain in the house, and perhaps in his room, and possibly on his bed. But after the physician has gone, the man says to his attendant, "Go tell him not to come again; to keep his advice and his medicines away." And then he says, "There! I have dismissed my doctor." If you could only dismiss your disease as easily as you can your doctor, it would be all very well; but to dismiss your doctor and keep your disease, is not wise. The ache stays whether you take the potion or whether you do not take it. The fever beats, whether you believe in this or that or the other thing. The fever is a fact. These things do not depend on quarreling schools of medicine.

A man says, "The High Church are for flummery, and the Low Church are for fanaticism. One church is for sensuous worship, and another church is for no outward worship. One is for doctrines, and another is for no doctrines. One is very rigid in its notions, and another is lax and loose in its notions. They are all by the ears. And I am going to take my own way. I will manage my case myself." You may in that way get rid of churches, and of a thousand disagreeable circumstances; but will any man get rid of that nature in which the law is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself?" Here is the law that determines selfishness. The marrow of the moral nature of man is the necessity of habitual, constitutional, continuous, characteristic benevolence.

Go out, now, into the world. Go out greedily to get gain. Go out and try to be happy. Wind yourself up with the key of selfishness Try to make your own powers serve you faithfully in harmony with each other. They are at a jangle with themselves. And you are not any better off because you have put away from you the church and ec-

clesiastical things. For the obligations rest not on the church, but on you.

Not they alone who have made a profession of religion are bound by the duties of religion. Every man that lives is bound by them as much as church members. A man does not see any better for being in an occulist's establishment. The necessity of his seeing, or the desirableness of it, does not arise from the fact that he is in an occulist's establishment. It arises from the nature of things. And if a man has ophthalmia, the necessities of his eye, and the laws of sight, are just the same as though he were under medical treatment and care. And yet, there are a great many people who seem to think that of course a man ought to do certain things because he is a member of the Church. They seem to think that being a member of the Church imposes obligations on a man. No, the obligations came long before the Church could have imposed them upon him. You say, "I am not a member of the Church, and you ought not to expect that of me." But are you not born? Have you not a temperament? Have you not that law of God written in you which makes it necessary that you should come to the help of the Church? I preach right, purity, holiness, to you, not because you are baptized, not because you are included in the covenants of the Church, but because you are men. If you had never heard a Sabbath bell, nor seen a Bible, these great obligations would have rested down on you, just as they do now, by the very primal conditions of your creation. They are as universal as man; and you are inexcusable, whoever you are, if you set aside the duties of religion because the Church ministers them. The Church does not create them.

5. There is an impression among many that there is a freedom and a largeness gained by going out of the sphere of religious teaching into doubt, into skepticism, into infidelity. There is much that men call infidelity which is not infidelity. A man may rise to a higher truth, and he may drop a lower one in doing so. A man, in a corrupt age, and in an ignorant church or sect, may, like Luther, rise to a higher ground. And calling him an infidel does not make him one. Whatever truth makes you more faithful, more just, more pure, more loving, more intimate in your relations to God, and more confident of the reality of invisible things; whatever view releases you from the thrall of biting, bitter, heated prejudices, is not infidelity. It is revelation. And embracing such a truth or view is rising to a higher form of religious belief. But there are many who do take on infidelity in its relaxing forms—that infidelity which denies, negates, everything; that is, which takes away the stress of their consciences. And they laugh, and say, "I used to feel guilty if I broke the Sabbath; but I do not now. I used to think that I ought to read the Bible every day; but now I lo

not read it once a year. I am freer than I was. I used to think that I ought to pray; but prayer is a superstition." And so men go on setting aside one, and another, and another point of fundamental religious belief; and they think they are becoming more and more free; and they ridicule Christians, whom they think to be bound hand and foot.

Now, I do not mean to say, as against infidelity, that the Christian Churches have the perfect view of religion. It is not my purpose to say that the theology of the times is more or less perfect or imperfect, or more or less crooked or straight. But I do affirm that the faith which is held by all sects of Christians is in the main a guide and a light. It might be a better light, but it is *a* light.

You and another man are walking in a troublous path. There are precipices on the right, precipices on the left, and deep morasses below, from which, if a man be mired in them, it is almost impossible that he should be extricated. Your companion is walking with a little lantern, containing only a tallow candle. You are walking without anything by which to guide your steps. He, with his tallow candle, in a little lantern, carries his dim light before him, and, taking one step at a time, manages to pick his way, though with some difficulty. You, who are so bold as to venture without any light, say to him, "Your tallow candle makes a miserable pretence of giving light: of all absurd things, the greatest is the attempt to make one's way through the world with such a light as that;" and you knock it into the mud. And it is pitch dark.

It may be that the lantern could have been improved; but is it improved by darkness? Now the man has nothing to guide himself with. That was the only light he had. It was a feeble, glimmering light, to be sure; but it was enough, though he was obliged to walk slowly and cautiously, to guide him safely. But you have knocked it out of his hand. And he makes a misstep, and plunges headlong down the precipice, and perishes.

Suppose all is true that you say of sectarianism and superstition: suppose all is true that you say of churches:—after all, are they not better than nothing? Is there not much help in them? Is there not much guidance in them? Do not they attempt to take hold of those fundamental instincts which belong to men, and which must be cared for and satisfied? And do they not go a certain way toward satisfying them? And does not infidelity bring men into bondage and darkness, instead of into liberty and light?

6. By throwing off religious faith, and the restraint of the Church, men do not escape conviction of sin, nor a sense of guilt, nor fear, nor unhappiness. The apostle, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, speaks upon this point:

"That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath

showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

If there were not a church on the globe; if there were not a Bible in the world; if there were not a teaching minister on the earth; if there were nothing but the sun by day, and the stars by night, and the rolling seasons; and if there were but a single man living, and he had the faculties that we have now, after all, he would be without excuse. For God has made the heavens, and the glimmering light of nature; and these are enough to hold a man responsible for his character and conduct.

And then, in the second chapter of the same epistle, the apostle says,

"When the gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having no law, are a law unto themselves. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another."

There is no man of any considerable degree of reflectiveness, or of any considerable degree of Christian sensibility, who is not made unhappy in himself by the way in which he is living. In the excitement of a career of business, in the intoxication of pleasure, men drown their unhappiness; but the moment there comes a leisure moment, there comes a time for thought. Reason rises up in every man's heart, under such circumstances. There is not a man here, I do not care how careless he is, who has not hours in which he sits in judgment on himself. He measures sometimes by one rule, and sometimes by another. A man's reason looks over his life, and he says, "I have toiled fifty years, and I have built my house, I have reared my dwelling strong, and filled it with articles of use and ornament, and I have a place among men; but, after all, what am I profited? Is life worth what I have spent for it? Am I happy? If I might live again, would I live right over the same life? Have I satisfied my early aspiration? Have I realized my own ideal?" Or, if he looks more closely at himself, in his habit of analysis, he says, "Am I selfish, or am I not? I have learned to wield the pen; I know how to paint the picture; I can carve the statue; I am able to build a house or a ship; I can guide the machine; I have the skill to invent curious help for domestic industry; I can handle the sword; I have power to manage anything in this world, almost; but myself I cannot manage. I do not know how to take care of my temper. My conscience is all the time jangling with my better feelings. On the one side is reason, and on the other side is passion. I am often carried away by temptation. Everything is wrong. I understand how to control money, but my own self I do not understand how to control. My being is an enigma to me. I am not acquainted

with its laws. I am ignorant of the nature of my soul. And there is nothing on the globe that I make such poor business in dealing with, as myself."

A man reads this, not out of the Bible, but out of his own soul There is a law of God. There is a way in which the mind was made to act. And if a man's faculties do not live in harmony (as nobody's do), then his own thoughts accuse him, and his judgment judges him, and his moral sense brings him under condemnation.

It is in such cases that the Gospel is lifted up, and that a way is shown to men; and though they may set aside the overtures of Jesus Christ, the revelation of mercy, they cannot set aside this judgment that is perpetually going on in their consciences.

7. The gradation in condemnation is a matter that ought to excite a passing thought in our minds. Those who have been taught the truth, and who believe it, and who then sin, are condemned in the greatest measure. Their guilt is according to the light they have had. But let no man say, "I was born of ignorant parents, I was born remote from instruction, and I cannot be condemned." Yes, according to your measure you will be condemned. You may not be condemned as others are; but the lowest grade of condemnation will be more than you can bear.

No one can afford to be sick in this world, in his body. All the contrivances and all the adaptations of nature have never made any body attempt to be sick. You never can change the body in this respect. You can make the body love odious things—tobacco, and what not; you can very much modify the digestive powers; but no modification, no sort of treatment, ever made sickness an agreeable thing. It goes against the grain altogether.

And by no means can a soul that is sick, that is out of order, be at peace with itself, or be happy. There is a condemnation that rests upon it just so long as it is in that state. And now comes the declaration of the Gospel,

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It rests not alone upon those that have been instructed, but upon everybody. Everybody that carries a disordered imagination, a darkened understanding, or an undeveloped or perverted conscience; every man who is living by the power of pride, or by the pioneering of selfishness; everybody that has substituted lust for sentiment; everybody that takes counsel of his animal nature, and not of his spiritual nature; everybody that is a man of the senses and of the flesh, must be born again. And though he may not be condemned as they are who have sinned against greater light, after all he will be condemned, and his condemnation will be as great as he can bear.

8. This moral constitution is not a mere thing of time It is not an arrangement for a special occasion, nor for a transitory scene. I understand it to be the testimony of the Saviour, and of the New Testament all through, that right and wrong are eternal; that they are not local, nor secular, nor transient; that pain follows disobedience; that he who does wrong suffers, and will suffer as long as he does wrong; that the moral constitution which divides men in this world, divides them in the other; and that he who by the help of God obeys the divine will, rises to higher and higher degrees of happiness. As on the one hand, he that in this world loves that which is right, and seeks that which is right, and, so far as in him lies, does what is right, goes on forever and forever with increasing joy and blessedness; so, on the other hand, he who, in this world, perverts his body and soul, grows worse and worse. And the evil effects of his misspent life do not drop off from him when he dies, but go on with him. There is some system of moral discriminations, of rewards and punishments, that goes on forever. It is Christ's testimony, it belongs to universal being, it is characteristic of God's moral government, that right and wrong are discriminable qualities, and that pain goes with one and pleasure with the other—and not just now, as belonging to the developing period, but in all time. The teaching is, that to all eternity these qualities go on, and that if a man continues sinful forever and forever, he will suffer forever and forever, while if he is holy forever and forever, he will be happy forever and forever.

You are not sinful, then, because you have been preached to; you are not sinful because the Bible says so and so; you are sinful on account of the perversion of that nature which God gave you, partly through ignorance, and partly through the willful blinding of your eyes. For a thousand reasons you have gone wrong. But when an offer is made to you of pardon for the past and of help to set the broken bone, or to readjust the dislocated joint; when God in his infinite mercy through Jesus Christ gives you a remedy for your mistakes and sins thus far if you will forsake that which is evil in the future, you turn away from him, and reject the proffered help, and will keep the terrible disease. Having the remedy within your reach, you are destroyed.

Men are very much like lunatics in hospitals. All their wants are provided for; everything is done, that can be done, for their comfort and welfare; they have kind and benevolent physicians and attendants; and yet, they set fire to the institution and burn it up. They are not made well by this deed. It is simply a part of their insanity to do it. And many men who are not supposed to be lunatics are doing the same thing. They are attempting to destroy the very institutions which

were erected for their benefit. They are resisting, rejecting, setting aside, all those curative influences by which God would bring them out of the state into which they have come through the perversion of their nature, back into that state which he designed for men.

It now only remains for me, having laid these brief facts before you, to say, that this is *your* business, not mine. In so far as you are concerned, I have the sympathies which properly exist between man and man, and which I borrow from my God; and yet, after all, *to his own Master every man stands or falls.* This matter concerns you first, and it concerns you most. *My* duty is completed in presenting the subject to you. *Your* business is to profit by the instruction you have received.

By the continuous importunity of the pulpit men come at last to have a kind of hidden feeling that they confer a favor on the church when they repent and come into the church. They seem to feel that God himself is laid under obligation to them. They seem to think that they have done a good thing in consenting to repent and go over to the side of religion.

This is a living and dying matter. It is a question like that of a mortal disease which has taken hold of you. When you take the doctor's medicine, you do not confer a favor on him so much as you do on yourself. And if you refuse salvation, if you reject the Lord Jesus Christ, it is you that lose, not I. Though every man on the street where I live were unvirtuous, virtue would be just as right, just as good, and just as profitable to me. Though every man in New York but you were a spendthrift and a vagabond, economy, frugality and a wise financial management, would be just as good for you. Every man stands for himself, on his own feet; and in nothing so much as in the concerns of his own soul.

You have your own nature, and the law of God is written on that nature. You have that in you which will always interpret right and wrong. If you go wrong, you entail on yourselves sorrows so long as you go wrong. And I bring to you the tidings of health—of a Physician who can cure the soul, fill it with light, fill it with joy, and lift it above itself, and finally restore all wastes, and correct all dislocations, and cure all morbid conditions, so that you shall shine out as the stars in the heavens. If you take this blessed Friend and skillful Physician, tidings of whom I bring to you to night, joy forever and forever be on your head! If you reject him, *you alone shall bear it.*

When the hour of death comes, no man can have companionship in dying. No two or more persons can die together so as to hold each other up. Every man dies alone, dies for himself, and goes before God on his own behalf. "Every one of us shall give account of *himself* to

God." Even if the whole heaven is filled with thronging multitudes, you will seem to yourself to stand as though there were not another person in existence besides you. And all the weight of God's law and of God's authority will centre and rest full on you.

It is your interest to repent and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And while it is a day of mercy; while God is near to you; and while by your conscience, by your hopes, and by your fears, you are being drawn to him, it behooves every man of you to take hold in earnest, so that it shall be not a mere experiment, but a blessed success and victory.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thee, our Father, for that knowledge which is given us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, of thy being, and of thy heart. We are no more strangers or foreigners. We are now of the household of faith. We are brought near. All our fears are driven away. Our hope grows apace, even unto salvation. By faith working through love, we discern thee. By faith we dwell in thee. We appropriate thy righteousness to ourselves, and enter into all the covenants of love with thee, and are made one—one with God, and one with Christ Jesus, and one with the indwelling Spirit. And so our life is comprehended in thine. So all our ways follow thy ways.

We rejoice in the blessedness of this communion: in all the peace which we have had; in all the joy which it has inspired; in all the promises which it holds out for the future, and which are Yea and Amen. Not one of thy promises shall fail. We may put our foot upon every one of them, and they shall not give way beneath us.

Thou, O God, dost love us better than we love ourselves. Thou art more gracious unto us than we know how to be unto ourselves. And therefore the more is the guilt of our destruction, and the more wicked is our breaking away from thee and turning to ourselves, and hewing out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

We rejoice, O Lord! in thy recovering grace; in thy patience which works in these obdurate hearts; in that fatherly kindness which thou hast shown, and art showing. And we pray that thou wilt not weary of the work of subduing that fractiousness of our dispositions which provokes thee.

Be pleased, O God! to spare us. Look upon the face of thine anointed. Behold us in Christ Jesus. And we pray that we may be, by thy care and culture, transformed into his image. And if we shall yet stand confirmed in virtue, and strong in all that is good, and fruitful in love, holy and beauteous, it will be by the grace of God. Not unto us, but unto thy name, shall be the praise. For, thou shalt work in us, and fashion all our goodness for us, working in us to will and to do of thy good pleasure.

Now, we beseech of thee, accept our thanksgiving for the blessings of the day. It has been a day of rest. It has been a day of knowledge. It has been a day of incitement. Thou hast made the sanctuary pleasant unto us; and thou hast made our homes as another sanctuary. And we thank thee for all these relationships, and all the enjoyments which flow from them.

And we pray to night, in the hour that is set apart, walled in by darkness and by storms, that we may find that peace of God which passeth all understanding. May we rejoice in the sanctuary again, and take new courage, with new confession, and new hope and faith, for the life which is to come. And we pray thee, when we shall go down into the morrow, that it may be with our loins girt about, with a clearer sense of duty, with more manliness, and with more Christian fidelity. And may we thus live from Sabbath to Sabbath, until all our days on earth are over. Then throw wide open the gate. Then stand thou therein to receive thy prodigals home. Then put thine arms about our neck, and clothe us, and put the ring upon our hand, and bring us with joy and rejoicing into our Father's house.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word which has been spoken, of caution, and interpretation, and warning. May we find in it reasons for more vigilance. May we be more earnest, and take heed to the things which are within us, as well as to the things which are without. Reveal to us the relations of the life to come. Make us to feel that we are casting ourselves away. The most precious of all things to ourselves, we are selling for dross. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

O Lord, our God! we beseech of thee that thou wilt, by thy Spirit, bring men to thoughtfulness, and to a better purpose. May there be many that shall be gathered, by the power of thy Spirit, into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And to thy name shall be the praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FOLLOW THOU ME.

"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; (which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?) Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."—JNO. XXI., 20–22.

It is evident that the first writing of the Gospel of John terminated at the last clause of the 20th Chapter. It has been thought, by many, on that account, and from the nature of the 21st Chapter, that it was added by another hand; but the ripest opinions, I think, agree, now, that this was a supplementary chapter added by John himself at a later period. Of the four Gospels, the first that was written was that of Matthew; and it is probable that it was written a few years after our Master's decease. Then came the Gospel of Mark; and then, that of Luke, at variable periods, with several years between.

The old tradition is, that on a certain occasion some holy men, elders of the church, came to John, then extremely old—somewhere between ninety and a hundred years of age, probably—and, showing him these three Gospels, asked him to add anything to them which, in his judgment, would make them more complete. And that he thereupon drew up his own Gospel, as adding to the others that which he thought they lacked. Very certain it is that the Gospel of John has more matter which the others have not, than it has of matter which is common to the four. However that may be, his is the last Gospel that was written, and this twenty-first chapter is the last part of the last Gospel. So that when he had read the other Gospels attentively; when he had drawn up his own; and afterwards, while recalling, by memory, the various scenes of his Master's life, having expended the whole force of his narrative upon that part which was enacted around about Jerusalem, the other Evangelists mainly concerning themselves with the Galilean life, John added much which refers to Christ's life in Galilee, and this one incident besides.

Jesus had been declaring to Peter, prophetically, the manner of his death. He was to die a death of violence; and Christ had predicted

SUNDAY MORNING, July 10, 1870. LESSON: 1. THESS., V. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 31, 454.

it. Peter, seeing John following, says to the Master, with that intrusive curiosity, almost meddlesomeness, which belonged to Peter's character, "What shall this man do? I am to be slain; but what is to be the history of this man?" And Jesus said,

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

John adds,

"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die."

Misinterpreting the phrase, "If I will that he tarry till I come," men got the notion that John should not die. And he quotes the incident to correct that saying. He declares that the Master did not say that he should not die, but only this:

"*If* I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

He does not expound the meaning of the passage. He uses it simply to refute that rumor, which was founded upon mistake. That there was meaning in it far beyond that which he developed on this occasion, there can be no doubt.

Peter's intrusive boldness seemed, at this time, as usual, to exercise itself in putting every man in his right place. He was unconsciously attempting to govern others, or to find out about others. He did not reflect that it was opposed to the Christ spirit. He did not reflect that personal consecration was the first thing in every man's life, and continuously the most important thing; but he was busy in respect to the probable history and condition of those around about him. As if the external history of any of them was a thing to be compared, for one single moment, with their adhesion to Christ; with the relationship of their spiritual union with their Master and Head!

Or, if Peter's motive were different from this meddlesomeness; it it were an anxiety to know what God provided for his people, and what was to be the providential dealing with his brethren, and particularly with John the beloved, even then it was carrying the matter beyond wisdom, in the presence of Christ, and in the nearness of his parting from them.

In either case, the reply was pertinent—namely, "What is that to thee? Your history is important to you; but what concern is it of yours that another man's history is to be this, or that, or another thing? *Your* history is in me. Follow thou me." And to each man, Christ says, "Follow *thou* me—never mind others."

The emphasis of this cannot be estimated unless we consider that Peter was an apostle, that it was to be his mission to make known the Lord Jesus Christ to men, and that he was about to be sent out to bring in disciples, to found churches, to institute a polity whose main principles should operate to the end of time.

All the more, therefore, it was requisite that he himself should follow Christ, and be filled with his Spirit, not making his mission, nor his external duty, nor his work in time, the main and chief part of his concern, but founding all this work upon a personal, interior experience of the love of God in Christ Jesus as the one thing needful to his immortality.

And we may fairly deduce from this instance several points, such as these:

1. Following Christ is a personal work preceding all official work, underlying it, as the soil out of which all official work is to spring. To follow Christ is to reproduce in ourselves his dispositions, to accept his ideas of life and of duty, to fulfill his commands, and to be in union with him by love and sympathy.

The servant of Christ has all the instruments belonging to the work of education which philosophy has, and has, over and above all others, his own personal experience, by reason of the intimate communion of his soul with the Lord Jesus Christ. The power by which we are to instruct men is not simply the ordinary didactic power. The power by which we are to teach and preach is not simply the expository power which any man may have. It is not that which secular education may give. It is that which has been wrought in us, distinctively and peculiarly and personally. It is that which makes us individual, and our experience individual. It is that which constitutes the personality of every man's ministry in this world. And although the resources of learning are to be availed of, although all ordinary causes are to be employed for ordinary effects, we are never to forget that the distinctive and peculiar power of the Christian teacher or the Christian worker, lies in that which has happened between his soul and God, and which is original, native to him, and distinctive above that of every other. For as no two persons are alike, so the work of grace in no two hearts is alike. And every man has a teaching and a power distinct from that of any other man.

Following Christ, then, is the main preparation, though it is not the only one. It does not disdain any other preparations; but it is that foundation on which all other preparations are to be built. It is that spirit which is to quicken all other influences and instruments. It is that which God hath taught us by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, filling our conscience, and giving intuition to our whole moral sense, so that every part of us has been inspired—not authoritatively inspired, but inspired in other respects just as much, and just as really, as the apostles and holy men of old themselves were inspired when they taught sacred things.

2. One is in danger of losing his personal relations with Christ

through a spirit of curiosity and a spirit of anxiety about the cause of Christ in the world—about the cause of events. One may, by a curious studying of the probable line of divine providence, be so absorbed as to lose his own personal identity, I had almost said, as a follower of Christ. This spirit of anxious forelooking is as mischievous in spiritual life as that anxious forethought which Christ dissuades us from is in secular things. And yet, in times of disturbance, in times when it is doubtful which way things are moving, when beliefs are broken up, when new policies invade old ones, when convulsions take place, the heart of many a man broods; and many a Christian man says, "The old paths are better; but the flood is setting in, and the landmarks are being removed, and the deluge of unbelief and uncertainty is coming." And men in thus brooding on the probable history of the church, almost forget that Christ says, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Your personal life in Jesus Christ, which is first, and is higher and better than everything else, being secured, you need not be without curiosity, and you are not forbidden to forelook, and to imagine; but, after all, it is from your personal connection with the Lord Jesus Christ that your faith is to come. There is to be your life, and not in what you foresee, nor in what you hope, nor in what you desire, of the outward history of the cause of God in this world.

3. Every man's personal history and duties are so separate, so individual, so private, that he must follow Christ, not in company necessarily, nor as a member of a body, but for himself. Whatever Christian families are in this world—whether they are living according to the world or not; whether they tolerate unlawful pleasures or not; whether they are remiss or not; whether they are ordained according to the mind and will of the Spirit that governs in the spiritual realm, or according to the mind and will of the spirit that governs in this world—this does not concern you half so much as that you follow Christ. Your father and your mother may seem to you to be going wrong; but you are not their judge, except so far as to determine what your duty is. Your brothers and sisters may seem to you to be taking undue liberties; nevertheless the word of the Lord to you, and to each one of you, is, "What is that to thee? Your salvation does not stand in another person's fidelity. That other person may be all right, and you may be all wrong; or he may be all wrong, and you may be all right. Follow thou me, and I will take care of him." We very often are so prone to anxiety through our affections that we often unconsciously assume the attitude of dictation, and carry all the burden that we should carry if men were dependent on us for their salvation, and not upon God.

Whatever churches are—whether they are departing from the faith of the fathers or not; whether they are mixing a vain philosophy with the truth or not; whether they are opening the doors too wide to the world or not; whether they are throwing out ordinances that should be retained, or taking in ordinances that are the work of men's hands; whether they are going up or down—whatever may be their condition, it is not for you to carry their burdens. You are not appointed the bishop of the churches, nor is any man. And the word of the Lord to every man is this: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Not that you have not a right to form judgments; not that you have not a right to have an affectionate solicitude for the welfare of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth; but you have no right to form judments and to have solicitude to any such extent as to disturb your peace—certainly not to any such extent as that you shall carry any additional burdens. And yet there are men in the world who imagine themselves to be set apart and foreordained to murmur and repine. And forever they see the dark side of all movements. And they pray against the defections of the churches. They talk about the defections of the churches. They are full of murmurings and repinings about the defections of the churches. They are so full of other men's misdeeds and supposed faults, that they have little spirit left, and little time left, for their own personal edification in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord says to these heresy-hunting grumblers, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me, and I will take care of heretics."

Whatever the community is; whatever may be the fate of nations; whether wars are coming or revolutions are impending; whether the cause of the common people seems to be in darkness and to be growing worse, as in the great reaction of 1848; or whether all combinations seem to point forward to the history of the laboring men, and of the common people, and the mass of mankind are prosperous in the prospect—whatever may be the condition of the community, your prior duty is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you give yourself to these other things, not ordained to be a prophet, not called to be a leader, Christ says to you, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

In the midst of all convulsions, in the midst of all uncertainties, how many times men think that there is almost no use in trying to be good! "Who knows," say they, "which way to go? Ministers are disputing; churches are worldly-minded; the foundations are broken up; and who cares for holy things? A man might as well cast his lot in with them, and take things as he finds them." Thousands and thousands of men have been almost tempted to give up serving religion, and have said, "Things are mixed and uncertain; so

they have been since the world began; and so they will be until the the world ends; and I will take them just as I find them, and enjoy myself." In other words, in the baldest form, it is saying, "O Soul! eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow thou diest." There are a great many persons who are discouraged, and who feel that self-denial, and humility, and painstaking, and real personal discipline, are of no use; and say, "When nobody else tries to live so, why should I so live?" But Christ says to every man, "Follow thou me." Let the pope go; let the bishop go; let the priest go; let the minister go; let the church go. To each man for himself, and to every man on the globe, the Lord says, "Be faithful personally to me."

But this subject may be brought home even more closely than in these general ways. There are those who are obscured and perplexed in the disputes that obtain in respect to ordinances and doctrines and orders within the church. They are the prey of men who desire to make proselytes. They are pulled hither and thither.. They are exhorted by this one or that one. They defer the work of personal holiness until they shall have settled these absolutely unsettleable questions in respect to the authority, the organization, the order, of the instruments of religion—namely, the outward churches.

There be many persons who will tell you that their faith has almost failed them. They have heard so much and seen so much of disagreement, and the whole question of the authority of the church, and of its various impositions and duties, is in such a condition in their mind, that they are almost tempted to give up the whole matter in disgust. Of those who, in the providence of God, are surrounded by influences which stir up men's attention to external order, there are many who are caught in these infinitesimal disputes about infinitesimal things—about colors; about the cut and form of garments; about the order of coming in or going out; about the points of the compass (for it is immensely important in the salvation of a man's soul that he should read with his face toward the right point of the compass). They are so disturbed as to whether the right hand was put on the right head, and whether this right head put its right hand on somebody else's right head; they are so disturbed as to the whole outward circumstances which relate to religion, that they are in danger of quite forgetting the Lord that bought them. Oh! what matters it whether your mother's name was Gates, or Bates, or Page, or Smith? What matters it whether she was nearly related to such and such an one or not? What matters it whether you know who she was or not? She is your mother, and that is enough. The main thing is that the heart and the love which you bear to her tell you everything. Strip off the whole history; let what will happen externally, it will be all as nothing. It

will not move nor disturb the central impulse of your life. A child loves its mother, not because she was of this or that family, or of this or that connection, but simply from what she is to the child.

Let those settle these questions who may or must, who will or can; but let every man who stands in this great flurry of ecclesiology, let every man who stands perplexed in bat-like twilight, seeking to fly, remember that the main thing, after all, is that the heart shall be inflamed with love toward the Lord Jesus Christ, so that, as the child follows the mother, every one shall follow him, and be perfectly certain that in the last day, when we rise, in the forefront of the universe he will stand; and let us remember that if we have followed him, and our hearts have felt his heart all through life, no matter what priests say about us, no matter what churches say about us, the words will come to us from him, "Well done; well done."

And in respect to these disturbing influences where the providence of God has cast you, I do not say, "Go out of that church and go into a more simple one." *Let every man abide in the calling wherein he was called.* As respects all these external things, do not busy yourself about them; do not listen to them; do not care for them "Follow me," says the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to make it the business of your life to follow Christ and to love him.

Parents often stand in the light of their own good, and even weaken their moral power, by an undue and improper anxiety for their own children. There may be an anxiety for one's children which shall leave the impression on the child's mind that you have no faith in God. Else why such anxiety? Parents may be so anxious for the welfare of their children that they have very little peace, very little joy, very little trust in God. In order that our hearts may ring out to our children in the sweet music of true religion, those hearts must not be touched. If you lay your hand upon a bell when you strike it, it is muffled, and the sound does not come forth. Take off your hand, and everything, and let the bell sound out sweet and clear. The heart must not be muffled by these anxieties and fears and torments.

"To be sure," it is said, "the parent who loves the child must be anxious that it shall do well." Yes; but hope is a better counsellor than fear, for parents. It is just as easy for your mother to say, "The God that has taken care of me will take care of my children. I will trust him who has never left me nor forsaken me, and who has given me the right to cast my care on him because he careth for me. Not my vigilance, not my skill, not my wisdom, will I trust. I acknowledge that I do not know how to take care of these my little ones; but God knows, and I will leave them in his hands." My dear friends, wonderful is the way of God with children. How many children there

are that come up in spite of their parents! How many parents there are who do enough to destroy, it would seem, the very possibility of their children ever coming to manliness and integrity, but whose children escape in spite of parental perversion, and come up to honorable and useful manhood! And how many children are surrounded by parents who, though they are exemplary, are overborne by anxiety, and who are afraid, not only of the devil in general, but of everything in particular—afraid of the least thing; afraid of the shaking of the leaf; afraid of exposing their children to the slightest temptation; and who bring up those children in such a way as to produce the impression on the child's mind that the parent is burdened and untrustful, and has but little help from above. That the parent expects that there is going to be some comfort hereafter, the child is led to believe; but there is no impression made upon the child's mind that there is any expectation on the part of the parent of immediate relief. And to-day the Lord Jesus Christ stands in every nursery, and by the side of the cradle of every loving mother, and of every Christian father, and says, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." And if you follow Christ, the fruits of that following—sweet peace, and rich content, and unbounded trust in God—will be the very elements, without any wisdom or management on your part, by which your children will be brought out right. Do not, therefore, let your children disturb your settled peace. Do not let your trust be sacrificed through an unwise anxiety about those who are under your charge. Understand that the love of Christ in your soul is the best means of bringing your children in the way they should go; let them see the evidences and results of true holiness in you. Your gentleness, your forgiveness, your patience, your faith in the invisible, your trust in an unknown and unseen God, will be more preaching to them than all the didactic instruction which you can give them—though this should not be omitted.

So it is with teachers of all kinds, with preachers pre-eminently, who are the teachers of the Lord, and with all who labor for men's religious education. They are in danger of emphasizing exetrior things, and forgetting the true interior and spiritual elements. In all such instruction, personal piety is the power of teaching. It is that which a man is between his soul and God that gives him cogency, and, under the divine providence, brings forth fruit in others. It is quite possible for men to be busy with the outwardness of their work, for them to be given to a secular administration of it, and yet be conscientious, painstaking, faithful persons. But they will have very little comfort in it. And Christ would warn every such one, saying, of all

this outward history, "What is that to thee? This is thy business—follow thou me."

It would be a word of caution, too, for busybodies in spiritual things—for there are busybodies in spiritual things as really as in things social and temporal. There are men who have adopted the cant words of the day, and who are all the time talking about *saving men's souls.* The moment they are converted, they think that means that they are to be *saving souls.* And they pray about *saving souls.* And they exhort to the *salvation of souls.* They are constantly running around and trying to *save men's souls.* Christ would say to them, "Save your own souls first." To do that, needs a great deal of care. It is far more important that a man should be built up in a holy and devout and deeply spiritual life, than that he should be running round for volunteers long before he himself understands the spiritual drill. And when men have been consecrated to the work of doing good, it is far more important that they, having begun a Christian life, should be built up, than that there should be gathered in raw recruits who know nothing. There be those who are overloading the church with crude material; and the church, like an overloaded wain, groans with this crude material, which is in danger of spoiling in keeping. There be those who seem to think that the great work of the ministry is to be the alarming and converting of men, and the saving of their souls.

Now, the way of salvation is through sanctification, and he who would have the cure of souls should understand that to make men holy who have begun to be Christians, is, among other things, the most providential way of saving those who are not professors of religion. While I would not do anything which would take from you enterprise; while, within due bounds, and at discretion, it is the duty of every Christian man, as God gives him opportunity, to save men, snatching them as brands from the burning, if they are in extreme peril, and by kind words, at proper times, win them to religious things; and while I would not lighten the motives to this, I would caution you against making your religion to stand in this running about to *save men's souls.* Christ would say to you, under such circumstances, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Practice for a little while before you begin to preach to others.

That which is true in all the instances which I have stated, is still more signally true in relation to Christian sects into which the church of Christ is divided. I have never been of those who thought sects were, in and of themselves, evil. Where they have been exploded and formed by explosion; where they have, by misdirected assault, been rendered bitter; where they have been selfish and exclusive, there has

been great mischief in connection with this subdivision of the great body of men in Christian life. But it has been because the sects have allowed themselves to use the malign elements as instruments in their Christian warfare. The mere fact of the subdivision of the multitude of men into different organizations, with different politics and governments, and even different modes of administration, is not in itself singular. It is inevitable. You can no more make them alike than you can make any two towns alike in their modes of governing, or any two families alike in their methods of administration. For, as the families in a neighborhood are held to great generic rules—those, for instance, of truth, and honor, and industry, and personal purity, but, within these generics vary infinitely in their modes of administering the economies of the household; so in the families that spring up under the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, there will be infinite diversities. And where the populations are large, there is no reason why those who are of one mind—that is, those who are in elective affinity—and who are thrown together, should not coöperate with each other in the administration of the affairs of the church, as seems wise to them. Sects are not in themselves, but only in the unwise modes of their administration, mischievous, and evil, and to be deplored.

You will never have one church in the sense in which men are looking for it. Blessed be God for that. One church such as men are looking for would be a very stupid thing. It would be the extinction of that individual, sharp personality out of which comes variety. And the riches of mankind are in variations. All growths tend to diversity. All development is in the direction of complexity. And persons who are capable of being reduced to absolute unity are personally very low in the scale—very near to zero. Otherwise they could not coalesce, and come into perfect unity. And all those great sects that suppose themselves to be units, are not. There are materials for diversity within them. They are full of unexplored and unexpressed forces. They are full of undelivered or undeveloped variations of belief. They are held in reserve, and kept down. They are either like winter, when all seeds and roots are waiting to grow by-and-by, but are not growing; or, they are like magazines that are stored full of mischievous missiles that by-and-by will be touched off. There is no such thing as unity, there never was, and there never will be.

The word of the Lord, therefore, to those who are with sects that are seeking to destroy themselves and build up the one spirit of this, that or the other organization, is, "What is that to thee?" If men like to be baptized by immersion, let them. If men like to be baptized by sprinkling, let them. If men like to have preachers ordained by bishops, in the name of the Lord, let them. And if men like to have

preachers that never had a bishop's hand on them, let them. "Follow thou me," says Christ. Let every sect, instead of attempting to bring itself nearer to God, and making itself more acceptable to the Lord Jesus Christ by absurd historical arguments, do what every horticulturalist is obliged to do. It is quite in vain for him to boast of the superiority of his fruits and flowers, or to assert that his orchard or garden is better than anybody else's. He must bring forward flowers and fruits that the judges will say are better than those of others. And then it does not matter what name you put on them, or whether you put any name on them at all. "By their fruits ye shall know them," says every horticultural committee; and so said Christ.

Now, if it is understood that that is the best sect which makes the best men; if we are at liberty to call on the different sects to show the highest results of their training, then I am satisfied. Let them be judged according to their merits. And if the Roman Catholics can prove that they make better men than we Protestants do, that ends the argument with me. I am going in for the sect that makes the greatest number of men of the best sort. Bring in your Calvinists; and if they make magnificent, strong men, but make only a few of them, and crush all the weak for the sake of making these few almost supernaturally strong men, it is not my ideal of a church. But show me the sect that makes the largest number of men high and noble, and I am for that. If it be Calvinism, with its "five points" accuminated, and sharper than the "pricks" against which Paul kicked, I will take it. Or, if it be Arminianism I will take it. I do not care for arguments. Go away with your texts. Show me the men that you have made. Some of you drill by Upton's tactics, and some of you by the French tactics; some of you employ one system, and some another; but I do not care whose tactics you drill by, let me see your men fight; and after the campaign I will tell you which turns out the best soldiers. I will admit that drill has something to do with these things; but I declare that that army which wins victories oftenest, and on the broadest scale, is composed of the best material. And though I believe that some sects are far better than others, and that some views of doctrine are far more likely to produce good results than others; and though in laying the foundations of a sect I should be very careful in making selections of men and measures and views of truth; yet, after all, the true test as to the value of the different sects, as they exist, is that which determines which has produced the best results. Those sects which produce the greatest number of eminent Christian men, those sects which fill the garden of the Lord most abundantly with the best fruits, are the wisest and most efficient in their administration.

If that responsibility were brought to bear on the sects, how great

a change there would be! How we should cease boasting! How we should cease arraying ourselves, with external arguments, one against another! How we should feel that the Lord had said to every man, whether he be layman or minister, "Follow thou me!"

Following Christ personally, individually, as well as collectively, is our great business—not following him in a certain way; not following him by given services and ordinances and ceremonies; not following him in externals; but following him in trust, in joy, in peace, in hope, in love, in faith in the invisible. And they are the best Christians who, following Christ thus, follow him the most closely.

This is a severe test; it is a different test from that by which men usually measure themselves; and it is a test which, if strictly applied, would destroy sectarians, mostly.

May God grant that we may have this test by which to measure ourselves. We are not what we are by reason of our knowledge, nor by reason of our will-power, but by the degree in which we represent and reflect the mind and will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian brethren, you are not safe because you are in this or that fold. You are not safe because of any covenants or promises. You are not safe because of the fulfillment of any duties in this or that direction. Your whole hope, your whole safety, lies in this, that you are following Christ, and that his spirit and your spirit are in such sympathy with each other that he lives in you, and you live in him.

And in this spirit of following Christ, let us gather together, this morning, as we propose to do for the last time this summer as a church, and as Christian brethren of every name, to accept Christ as our Master, our Guide, our Joy, and our everlasting Reward. I affectionately invite all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, and who put their whole hope of salvation in the faith of his love to their souls, to tarry with us, if it be convenient for them, and partake with us of the emblems of his dying love.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We acknowledge thee, Almighty God, to be our Governor. Thou art our Teacher, and thee we would obey and follow. We confess that we have not followed thee even according to our knowledge; that we have turned aside, and that we do every day turn aside, from the right way. Our own conscience condemns us; and thou art greater than our conscience. Even by the feeble light of our own knowledge, we see the better way, while we are pursuing the worse. But, how much higher than ours is thy conception of that which is just, and pure, and true, and righteous. If thou wert to measure us by that same law by which thou dost measure thyself; if thou shouldst account with us, as with thine own angels in heaven, who of us could stand? We are as little children in the presence of those who are grown in knowledge and experience. We know not anything, and are filled with mistakes, and easily run into transgressions and into conscious and purposed errors. And we need every day thy forbearing love. We need thy patience and thy forgiveness in which hath been, in every age, the hope of the world. Thou dost not delight to destroy. Thou dost delight to save, to make alive, those that are dead; to cleanse those that are impure; to make whole the wounded; to go after the lost; to reclaim them; to seek and rescue them. And we rejoice that thy work has not expended itself, and that it is not a power unused; and that thy truth, and all the means by which it is surrounded, are yet living instruments, and that thou dost own them, and bless them. And we behold thy churches built up, and multitudes reclaimed from evil, and the ways of the Lord thronged. And we rejoice to believe that thou wilt never leave thyself without a seed to serve thee.

We beseech of thee, this morning, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the service of the sanctuary, in thine own midst. Hear the voices of all that are supplicating thee this morning in their own behalf, or in the behalf of those who are near and dear to them. Accept the thanksgivings of those who offer thanks. Grant, we pray thee, that there may be a willing heart to make confession, on the part of all burdened consciences. May that distance which care and worldliness puts between our thoughts and thee this day, be quite dissipated; and may all of us be able to draw very near to thee.

And we pray, O Lord, that we may have some sense of the great and wondrous love wherewith thou hast loved us, and with which thou dost love us. May we feel that we are dwelling in the midst of thy divine thoughts of mercy, that we are nourished by thee, and that the whole life which we have, and all its power, of pleasure and of joy, is of thee, and is daily sustained by thee. And may it be but a little thing for us to serve thee, that art serving us continually.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all the families that are represented in this congregation. If there be any absent from us to day, wilt thou fill them with thoughts of mercy. And as their hearts turn again to this place, and to all the remembrances of scenes gone by in days past, we pray that the Spirit of the sanctuary may be wafted to them, and that they may partake of the blessings which we have in coming here. Bless, we pray thee, wanderers who are upon the sea or upon the land, near or far, and preserve them in thy good providence. Speed them in their errands, and bring them back again to the hearts that love them.

We pray for all that are strangers to day in our midst, in strange places, with new associations. Grant that there may be the old love, the blessed spirit of God, that long hath known them. May they find thee the same here to day. May their prayers arise with acceptance before thee. May they rejoice in the sacred songs of thy sanctuary, and find this the house of God, and therefore a home for their hearts. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless

all our citizens of every name, that worship thee this day. Grant that all those who are in error may more and more see the truth.

Bless this nation. Bless all the states and their governments. Bless the government of the United States. Grant that thy servant, the President, may walk in the spirit of wisdom. May he fear God, and do justly. We pray that thou wilt bless all who are associated with him in counsel. Bless the legislature of the nation. Grant, we pray thee, that fidelity, and equity, and purity may be the stability of our times.

We pray that thou wilt bless the nations of the earth, and gather them, according to thy promises, at last, into a great realm of peace, from which are banished ignorance, and superstition, and all wrong. Grant that at last the birthright of the world may come, and Christ descend to reign for a thousand years.

And to thy name shall be the praise for ever and for ever. *Amen.*

WAR.

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, and yet ye have not, because ye ask not."—JAMES IV. 1, 2.

This is a description of the turbulence of man, regarded simply as an animal. There is a latent implication here, also, of man as a spiritual being. As an animal, he is restless, avaricious, dishonest, plundering, murdering, forever desiring, and yet unsatisfied in his desires, because his lower nature never can be at rest, but, like the troubled sea, *casts up mire and dirt.* "Because ye ask not." Because the spirtual side of man, which derives its being from God, and all the plentitude of its enjoyment from spiritual things, through prayer and faith, does not come into activity, men are unhappy.

This is James' philosophical analysis of the source of war. Violence and physical force in the management of men arise from their excessive animal conditions.

It is true, as a matter of history, that wars have mainly sprung from the passions. Only now and then, and less and less frequently as we go backward on the path of time, have wars represented principles; and even the principles that they have represented are the lowest, and the nearest to that which is carnal, of any.

The necessity of force in this world is in the ratio of the strength of men's lower nature. That part which is animal and physical must, at last, for government, go back to force.

Man is a compound. Reason and moral sense are, as it were, set upon another organization—an animal and physical one. So the apostle Paul, by a figure of speech, represents man as being dual; as being two men in one; as being a carnal man and a spiritual man. The spiritual man is superimposed upon the basilar or carnal man.

Man is a rational being, and he is also an irrational animal; and it is quite possible for him to act in either of these characters as separated from the other. It is quite possible for a man to act as an animal with almost no guidance from his moral sense, or from his reason. It is also

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possible for a man to supercede the instincts of his lower nature, and act entirely from rational and moral considerations.

In the one character, men will govern themselves by reason and the moral sentiments—by the higher motives. If this is not possible, then they must fall down, for government, to that range, or to that plane, where they can be reached. It is far better to govern men by the voluntary instincts of their moral nature; but if that cannot be, it is far better than that they should go ungoverned, that they should be governed by their intellectual forces; by reasons and persuasions addressed to their higher feelings. But if they are not susceptible in either their moral or their intellectual nature, it is far better then that they should be ungoverned, that they should be governed by appeals to their selfishness. But if they cannot be reached by such appeals, rather than that they should not be governed, it is better that they should be governed by direct appeals to the flesh by pain—by the actual compression of force. That is the lowest and meanest way to govern men. It is only better than no government at all.

But men must take their choice. For government is of God. Not by decree is it made obligatory, but it is organically necessary. That is, the structure of the globe is such that without government it could not cohere, and order could not exist. Government there must be; but what kind of government it is to be, will depend entirely upon the susceptibility of men in any age and nation to the different motives which may be addressed to them. Those who are so far civilized and Christianized that they are susceptible to higher motives, will be furthest removed from the law of force; but if men are so animal and bestial in their inclinations, and in their whole state, that they are susceptible to no other influence but that of force, then force must be employed. And it is just as rational, just as normal, as it is necessary and indispensable. And all the sentimentality about not using force, where force is the only thing that can be used, is surplusage and waste. I do not believe in using force if you can help it; but I do believe in using it when you cannot help it.

Lately, there is much said against using the rod in the family and in schools; and it is only an extension of that to find fault about the police in cities, and to teach that a higher view of man should lead us to withdraw all force from our cities. A pretty time we should have in New York without our police. A pretty time we have with them; and how much more we should have pretty time without them! And the same thing is extended to the nation. Armies are said to be cruel. Yes, they *are* cruel. The only crueler thing than an army, is a nation that has no army, and is uncivilized, beastly and savage. The law of force is the bottom necessity, and men can take their choice as to

whether they will come within the reach of it or not. If they do not like it, then let them go up. Or, if they will not go up, let them not complain that there is that omnipotent decree at the bottom which holds men by governing and coercing them.

Force is therefore to be used until you can do better.

But the law of Christian philosophy in regard to the use of force is not the ultimate discipline, but simply a preparatory one. Use it until you can develop instincts higher than that reaches. Then, as soon as possible, dispense with it. But until you can get some other motive-power, force is legitimate and wholesome—most wholesome—in this world, to those who least want it and most need it.

Whether that time has come in the history of the world in which force can be laid aside, as some poetic men, some sentimentalists, some philanthropists think, is a simple question of speculation. I do not think that time has come—not by generations yet. The law of force, whether as applied in the household, in the school, in the municipal police, or in the police of nations—which is the army—I do not think can yet be laid aside. I do not think the time has come by some hundred years when we can lay aside the power to use force in the government of individuals, of communities, of nations, or of corelated nations—the globe.

It is true that men have risen as individuals, and in numbers greater, probably, than ever before in the history of the world, into that state in which they are governed wholly by motives addressed to their reason, to their moral sense, to their affections, and to their interests. There are thousands of men living here to whom law has no relevancy. They have gone so far above the law that they do spontaneously the things which it requires. The law says, "Thou shalt not steal." That law does not apply to you, because, seeing the moral beauty of honesty, you are honest. I do not steal, not because there is a law that forbids stealing, but because I have no inclination to steal. The law says, "Thou shalt not murder;" but my neighbors are safe from my hand, not because there is a law against murder, but because I have another law written in myself that protects them. There is a law that men shall support the State; but I support the State by my taxes, not because the law says I must, but because I love my country, and because when I have reasonable ground for believing that one-tenth part of my taxes go to serve the country, I am glad to pay them. I do it of my own volition, and not because the law tells me to. The law simply tells me how much I shall pay; and I am willing to pay it if I know that the country gets one-tenth part, though the other nine parts are lost on scoundrels, for the sake of serving my day and generation—though you are not all of the same opinion

In many individuals a growth has taken place, so that they are no longer amenable to the law of selfishness, and are wholly free from the law of force, and do the things which they ought to do from considerations, not of necessity, but of choice.

In certain communities, also, far more than in others, this civilization has taken place. There are some nations that are far nearer than others to that time in which they will be able either to sheath the sword, or lay it aside wholly. There are small communities which are situated so that temptations to violence are removed from them, and so that the inducements to peace are numerous and strong. And so, there are limited classes in all nations, I suppose, that are prepared to be governed by moral suasion. In France, in Russia, in Spain, in Italy, yea, even in Turkey, I suppose there are classes of men who already are so civilized, and so developed morally, that it is possible to govern them by the moral law, and not by the law of force. But when men are regarded in a mass; when the world's population is considered; or when the population of Christendom is looked upon comprehensively, we are not to determine what is proper and what is possible by the consideration of the condition of individual instances, or of single classes, but we must take into consideration the condition of the whole of the populations. What their civilization is, and what the law is to which they are susceptible, must be determined before we can ascertain whether they must be governed by force, or whether they can be governed by moral suasion.

There are isothermal lines, or lines of equal heat, extending across the continent, which show where, in different longitudes, are the points which are of an average temperature through the year. There are also isobarometric lines, which indicate, at any given time, where there is an equality of atmospheric pressure. Now, there is in the moral globe what I might call isodynamic lines, showing where there is an equal moral pressure. And until these isodynamic lines have risen above the selfish instincts and into the sentiments—the affections and the moral sense—it is not possible to have peace, simply because it is not possible to dispossess the law of force. As soon as a nation is so far civilized that it averages in its population a susceptibility to moral motives higher than the line of selfishness in its character, then in that nation the time has come in which you can lay aside force, with exceptional instances, and can hope to govern by reason and conscience and enlightened interest. But in all nations where that line comes below, and yet rests in the animal region, the law of force is the salutary, the wholesome, as well as the indispensable law.

Men can therefore determine what they will be governed by, by determining what their character shall be; and nations will be governed,

in the long run, not so much by any external adjudication, as by the outworkings of the state of mind in which they are living, and by which they are acting.

It had been hoped and believed, and twenty years ago I believed, that the era of wars was about to close in civilized nations, and that war would leave the realm of Christendom, and retreat to brutal, savage nations. There were many things which justified this anticipation.

The great increase of popular intelligence led men to think that wars could not much longer stand the scrutiny of enlightened reason. The doctrine of human rights, also, was emancipating and bringing up a larger section to a direct or indirect influence in the administration of civil affairs. The progress of popular industry, giving men something to do, and attractions that would naturally keep them at home, rather than leave vast herds to be enlisted or turned hither and thither at the will of any despot, it was supposed would also have an ameliorating effect—as it did. And public sentiment had begun to cry out. Much was written, and preached, and lectured, and said in conversation, of the atrociousness and unchristianness of war. There were discussions of plans for a national arbitration of differences. It was thought, at that time, that we were on the eve of a Congress of Nations, in which questions of international disagreement or interest might be debated, and whose decisions would be a final settlement.

Then, there were beginning to be nations that set the example of disarming, or, if not of disarming, at any rate of not using their military and naval force. England was one of the first of them. But though it is true that England learned peace, she learned it from commerce, rather than from religion. It was with her as it was with all other nations—religion made her combative.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in-law against her mother in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Thus said the prophet Jesus. He came to divide houses against themselves; children against their parents; parents against their children; one against another, all the way through. And every word of this prophecy has been fulfilled. For wherever the Christian religion has been, there has been bitterness, and hatred, and persecutions, and wars. And the cruelest things that were ever done on the face of the earth, have been done in the name of religion, and by men who were acting under a malignant conscience. And England did not learn peace from love. Her looms taught her the benefit of peace. It was when she desired the world to be her customer that, as a matter of

political economy, she judged that peace was best. It was best, in her estimation, for the same reason that one kind of cotton was better to be bought than another, because it made up better, and sold better, and yielded more benefits to her.

So England learned peace—England, one of the staunchest of fighters, and one whose flag is all red, as if it had been baptized in nothing but wars from the beginning, and has on it the cross, to show that there was a touch of religion in her war—for wherever the devil is, he wants some hint of religion to commend him; and a cross on a blood-red flag is a good thing! And war is symbolized, not only on the flag of England, but on our flag as well. We that have the stars of heaven on our flag, have also the eagle, with its talon and its beak, both bloody. At any rate, however Great Britain learned peace, she learned it; and for the last twenty-five or thirty years she has been as studious for peace, as before she was studious for war. There was not a nation on the continent of Europe that had not heard the tread of her soldiers. And the worst of it was, that, for fifty years, during the great struggle from the time of Napoleon's outbreak until the advent of the great peace that followed, England went to war and spent thousands of millions, billions upon billions, of dollars. And although she, the most democratic of European nations, has lavishly poured her money into the hands of despots, to establish crowns and sceptres, on the Spanish peninsula, in the outlying German provinces, in the struggle of the Austrians against Napoleon, and in that Russian war in which the whole map of Europe was changed; although she, with her money and influence, has been fighting for dynastic reasons and popular reasons, nevertheless she learned peace. And England to-day is at peace.

But let no one ridicule England as though she had lost her power. Let it not be supposed that she has forgotten to be courageous. There is not a more courageous people on the face of the earth than the people of Great Britain. Woe be to him that wakes up the old lion, on the supposition that he has turned to a lamb! There may be a lamb in the neighborhood, but the lion yet remains. Woe be to him that rouses up the dormant strength and energy of that most wonderful nation! We ought to speak well of the people of England, because we are of their blood and bone. We came forth from their loins, as they came from the Germanic stock on the continent; and we and they are of the same race, bearing the same great race-marks.

But then, the history of Great Britain kindled the expectation, certainly among the sanguine, that the era of peace was dawning. In 1850 I went abroad for the first time in my life. Dr. Chapin crossed the sea with me (wretched, like myself, all the way over), bound for the World's Peace Convention on the Rhine. We were full of in

spirations of universal peace. And at that time I think that perhaps I prophesied, here or somewhere else, that we should "hang the trumpet in the hall," and that nations should "study war no more." I believed that that joyful day had come. But since that time there have been five great terrific wars, such as never had their parallel or equal—a commentary on prophecy!

In 1856 there was the Crimean war, with Russia on the one side, and France and England and Lombardy and Turkey on the other. The whole world stood in suspense at its magnitude. It was a dynastic war. In 1859 the war of liberation in Italy took place. This was one of the few wars for a principle, however unprincipled the actors may have been. The next was the great American civil war, in 1861, which never had any equal, or anything that compared with it, either in magnitude, or in the character of the men of whom its armies were composed, or in the importance of the principles which it involved, or in the stupendous results which were evolved from it. Then, in 1866, was the Prussian and Austrian War, which was settled at Sadowa. And now comes the French and Prussian War of 1870.

It was the millenium of peace in 1850; and between that time and the present—1870—there have been five terrific wars, one of which is just now about to commence, and in which two nations are standing, like a park of artillery, loaded to the muzzle, and awaiting the word to be discharged. Two of these five great conflicts were waged for a principle, and the rest of them for balance of power.

Yet we must not be discouraged. The day of peace is coming. And none the less is it near at hand because there is so much war. It is true that the wealth of the world is, in mines, and foundries, and forges, and shops, manufacturing destructive weapons. It is true that skill and inventive genius were never so alert and busy as to-day in manufacturing instruments of mortal pain. It is true that capital was never so largely employed in the production of munitions of war, that military men were never so much in vogue, and that nations were never so apt to plunge into conflicts, as just at that time when the downfall of Satan's kingdom is the surest.

At the advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ demoniac possessions were the most common in the world. And when our Master met a man who was possessed with devils, never were the fiends so violent and outrageous as at that point in which he said to them, "I tell you, come out of him." Then they rent the victim, and cast him on the ground; but it was the final struggle. And so we may hope that though wars may rage and thunder, and send up their lurid colors on the dark sky; that though hell seems well nigh to have broken through the crust of the earth, and to have poured forth its red streams,

during the last score of years, nevertheless, I think we are nearer than ever before to the great time of peace, and that these are the gigantic but expiring efforts of the era of war.

For, to some extent there is a progress of civilization and of Christianity which, though it is yet in transition, indicates that it is rapidly coming to a period of potency. It acts as all moral forces do in nascent periods—it provokes and annoys; but it is very soon to pass the state of provocation and annoyance, and to come to a state of dominance in which it will control.

In view of this hope and these prospects, there are influences for which men should strive, and there are certain elements which might be discontinued and discountenanced to some extent. An exposition of the evils of war, of its cruelties, of its cost, of its effects upon industry, and of its effects upon the common people, may be hoped to avail, and to create a judgment in the minds of men against this great scourge—though not to any such extent as has been supposed. I anticipate the incoming of the time of peace, not so much through the reason as through the lower instincts of men.

The education of the whole common people until the isodynamic lines shall rise higher than the passions, is one of the first practical steps toward peace. We never shall have peace with an ignorant, impoverished population at the bottom—never! As long as men of education make a class of themselves, and separate themselves from their lower and less fortunate fellows; as long as society is divided as milk is, the cream being at the top and the skim-milk at the bottom, just so long you will find society unbalanced, unequal, and liable to be thrown into convulsions out of which will spring wars. You cannot develop until you learn to take the whole mass of society along together; until the working men are relieved from a sense of injustice; until they are delivered from the irritation, the grinding, and the attrition of wrongs; until they are taught to be more than animals, and are treated as if they were more than animals; until they begin to feel the dignity of manhood. You cannot hope for peace when one-half or two-thirds of your great nation are basilar. And the idea that men can be directed by dynasties, by the leading minds or ruling spirits of any form of government, or any civil polity, without restraint, is the height of infatuation and folly. If you are going to have peace, it must be proclaimed by the common people. We shall not have peace till they understand that it is their interest as well as duty. When that time comes, we shall have peace guaranteed so that no tyrant can move it.

Whatever, then, tends to the education of the whole people, must necessarily tend to the diminution of the chances of war. War is not

an acute disease which can be cured by special remedies. It is a constitutional disorder. It belongs to human nature. It is the remnant in man of that old fighting animal from which Mr. Darwin says we sprang. One might find some presumption in favor of his theory, from the fact that there is so much of the animal left in us yet. It has been supposed that we sprang from monkies; and there has been an inquisition to see if there has not been a caudal appendage rubbed off. Nations have been explored to find a man who had a tail, as a monkey has, or some traces of one. You are looking in the wrong place. Look inside, and you will find resemblances to the monkey, the lion, the tiger, the bear, and the hog, all of them. Human nature is full of the animal. Unfortunately, his outside is better than his inside; and so he is not detected and exposed. And this disposition to assert our rights is the heritage which we have derived from our animal descent. And until we have taught the nations of the earth to live, not by the body, but by the head, we shall have continuous infractions of peace, and continuous incursions of war.

Hence, common schools and newspapers are all of them peace forces. They are not arguments on peace, but they are causes of peace. Arguments frequently fail when causes succeed. Industrial associations, which bring men together in common interests, and teach them ideas of brotherhood; guilds; unions; whatever gives the working-classes *esprit de corps;* any organizations by which men seek to restrain their lower nature, or to improve their own and each other's condition—these are moral means; and though in the first sphere and operation they may be selfishly employed, they are giving an incidental and secondary education which is tending to make more of these men, and elevate them, and prepare them for a higher plane of life by-and-by.

The admission of all classes to the administration of national affairs; the educating effect of giving suffrage to all the people, and of making the polity of their day dependent in some measure upon their thought and volition—these things are preparing the common people to be peaceful. That is, it is teaching them to use the coronal faculties, and not the basilar.

The effect of community of industrial interests on the world is not to be lost sight of. The workmen in the nations are beginning to feel in work a common bond. And commerce is but the more declarative form or development of the same thing. The interests of the world, always represented in commerce, work for peace. Commerce does not love war anywhere. Commerce that is stationary in ports; manufacturing commerce; transporting commerce, that is making exchanges throughout the globe; all industrial occupations, long for peace. And

they are so far educators of the people. And although this may be an indirect and remote education, yet it is one of those indirect and remote educations by a good many of which we hope to bring men up to a larger stature, and a millenial condition.

There is no possible cure for war, then, that leaves important classes of men under great wrongs. Reformation is the proper first step. But if you refuse reformation, you may resort to the next step, which is revolution. Next to that is war. You must have one of these. Choose from among them. For man is moving. God moves the earth, and he moves populations. And all wiseacres, all conservatives, all men that are satisfied with their present condition, cannot stop the progress of things.

And things that in a lower stage were not wrongs, and were not felt to be wrong, became so by the development of men. It is quite folly to reason back five or three thousand years ago, and say, "These things existed then, and were not condemned." A thing that five hundred years ago, or one hundred years ago, was a matter of indifference, has come to be a matter of wrong, simply because men have changed their relations to it.

Slavery was once a benevolent institution. In that era when men bought and sold their wives and children, and when in war all captives were put to the sword, then to buy them and ransom them, or to take them slaves, was the next thing to adopting them into national and family life. It was a gradation so easy and natural that there was not a handsbreadth between a man's slave and his own child. Under such conditions slavery was humane. But when nations had gone on growing so, and different classes and different interests had separated so, that to be a slave was to be removed five hundred degrees from the top section of society, then slavery became a monstrous wrong that could not be measured nor gauged.

There are two classes of men in our day, who, it seems to me, are promoting war. First, there are the *peace men;* men who insist upon peace at all hazards, without conditions; who will have peace anyhow; who are opposed to war under any circumstances. Their doctrine is a premium on tyranny. It is an endorsement of despots. Let it once go out that there shall not be any war anyhow, and wicked men and nations will be guaranteed against harm, and will commit atrocities with impunity. Let England and France say, "We will never go into war," and they invite attack from every side. And a man who says, "Peace at any price; peace at all hazards; peace anyhow," does that which in the most effectual way encourages men to disturb the peace. Such persons are producers of war.

You never can have peace, until you love justice so much that you

insist upon it that there shall be justice. Then you will have peace. But men who see nations ground into the dust, and do not feel that; men who see servile classes whose very nature is almost wiped out, and do not feel enough about that to be disturbed; men who see human nature prostituted, abused, and tyrants wiping their feet on God's precious souls, and do not think it is wrong, but think that peace is far more precious than human nature, human life and human growth —these are the very men who make war. Palliatives to tyranny are provocatives to war. And he is recreant who says "Peace," so long as there are these great fundamental, organic evils unrectified, for which there is no peace. God will not give peace where there is not purity. Therefore let those who want peace preach for it, and labor for it, and hope for it, as an indispensable means to it. Let them begin to rectify abuses. Let them take sides with the weak, and see to it that justice prevails among men who are deprived of their rights. Give no peace to the earth till righteousness prevails, and then you will take the shortest cut to universal peace. Wars are blisters on the body politic, to draw the inflamation out. When a patient is going to die of pneumonia, the doctor puts a blister over the affected part. It is bad to excoriate the skin, but it is worse to have inflamation of the lungs, and die from not having it drawn off. Wars are cauteries; wars are God's amputations of offending members; and they are very great evils; but those are greater evils which they are employed to cure. The surgeon's knife is a great evil, but gangrene and death are greater evils. Wars are hideous, infernal medicines.

Then there are the conservative men; men of indifference and selfishness; fastidious and refined men. There are some men who, in life, are very much like what thistle downs are in summer. God has at work under ground vast engines, great coarse, black roots, which crawl through the soil, and, by their hidden power, pump up large quantities of fluid into grass, and flower, and plant, and shrub, and tree. The great expansive force, the mighty suction, the terrific power of this tremendous enginery, is felt in everything that has vegetable life. It is the omnipotence of Almighty God distributing itself through nature. A thistle-down is chased through the air by a butterfly, on a bright summer day, and they hold counsel together about *the vulgar violence of Nature.* They are wafted along by zephyrs. And they say, "See how we live!" Says the thistle-down, "I never was born. I was just lifted up one day; and I have floated in this way ever since. I have all the comfort that I could desire. I do not work like that old oak tree. There is no sap pumped into me. I just float and enjoy myself." And the butterfly says, "See how beautiful, how exquisite, I am! Heaven and Summer bathe me with beauty

And I am full of sweetness. If I touch the earth, it is but just to suck honey from this flower or that, and fly on." But in the midst of their conversation there comes a thunder-crack; and immediately the rain pours down in torrents; and after the shower, where are the thistle-down and the butterfly? Gone down to the earth from whence they sprang, and annihilated, are they; while Nature pumps on, and sends through the mighty enginery of creation the elements of life and strength.

There are vast forces operating in the world. Some of them are good, and some are bad. And we shall find in society the dilettante—the kid-gloved, delicate-fingered man, that happens to have been born in wealth. He has a little brain, and God made up the equilibrium by what he put on the outside. And he talks of *keeping things as they are.* "What is the use," he says, "of these rude convulsions, these excitements; these attritions; these agitations? How ridiculous these men are that go about stirring up the world! Why do not men preach the mild and lovely Jesus, and do as I do?" And these butterflies, these thistle-downs; these worthless seeds of a noxious weed—what are they doing amidst those forces which are really regenerating the world, and lifting up the foundations of things, and beating out and sowing seeds to bear fruit in millennial times? These are the men who are provoking their fellow men into war, and refusing to recognize the grandeur or to sympathize with the results of those mighty orgasms and labor-throes by which generations grow and are born into higher states. These are the men that talk peace and make war.

In regard to the great conflict on whose dark and windy edge we stand, it is not my purpose to speak—more than a word. It is not a war for a principle. It is one of the worst kind of wars that can in modern days be fought. In neither case is it a war of self-defence. It is not a war for the liberation of any class, like the Italian war. It is purely a dynastic war. And although the common people in both nations seem to be utterly inflamed by a spirit of patriotism, and those of each nation cluster about a crown that has no vital connection with their interests; and though it is in this sense their war; yet, it is not, in the higher and better sense, a common people's war. It is a king's war.

Uninformed as we are of the distinct steps which led to this war, we cannot form a judgment except with the consciousness that it is to be re-formed; but so far as our knowledge goes, it seems to me that there is no whit of difference between the blame of the one and the blame of the other. France and Prussia both seem to have been arming for some years past, expecting that the time of conflict would come when they should prove which was the stronger military force in Europe.

And they have been ready for it. And the King of Prussia was arrogant, and the Emperor of France was impertinent. And so, between arrogance and impertinence, here comes this war, that will deluge the continent in blood. Oh! if they that bring on this mischief might suffer!—but no, it is the innocent. How many thousands will fall before another Sunday comes, our imagination may depict, but we cannot tell. How many thousands, lusty in youth, full of hope and promise, the sons of widows cherished, on whom rests the family, as the house stands upon its corner—how many of these will have perished, or will be maimed, we cannot tell. If they could only think, "The flag will fly washed of its stain," they might have some consolation in dying. When our boys died at Chickamauga and at Gettysburg, they died thinking, "I leave behind for my life a country free from slavery; I leave an unvexed posterity; I leave a united patrimony;" and they could well afford to die. But what can the gasping Prussian or the gasping Frenchman think? He dies, and there is no principle settled in the one way or the other. The question is simply, Which nation has the strongest army and the expertest generals? No moral principle is brightened. No great end of nations is gained.

There are incidental things that make us interested in the Prostestant nation; but this is not a war for Protestantism. There are reasons why we should feel a natural drawing towards the Germanic nation, which tends more to democratic ideas, and from which we derived our notions of liberty; but it is not for democracy or liberty that this war is waged. I feel a stronger sympathy for the German people than for the French; but I do not see that any of these questions on which they are in advance of the French are involved in this war. I look upon this conflict as a needless fight, with gigantic cruelty and hideous power; and I feel as if there had never been a guiltier war. Woe! woe! be to that crowned head in Prussia; woe! be to that crowned head in France, that so ruthlessly and so needlessly has whelmed this day and generation into measureless suffering.

And it is for us to stand, as a nation, sorry—sorry by all the lessons which we have learned in our own chastisements; sorry, because the wounds are unhealed yet in a thousand households; sorry because the tears have not forgotten to flow over our own dead; sorry because we know what war is, even at the best, when it is waged for the loftiest purposes, and in the name of the Lord, for the sake of the whole common people. We ought to be sorry for wars that are so much worse, and that must be so bootless, as they are ruthless.

I have heard men say, "If there be war, grain will rise. Commerce will revive on our side. It is an ill wind that blows no good to anybody." If my neighbor's house were on fire, I should as soon think

of rushing in to plunder, and say, "I will divide and partition his goods —it is an ill wind that blows no good to anybody," as I should think of looking on the convulsions of Europe, and counting up the benefits that will come from them to us, by sea or by land. I am ashamed of it!

The sources of our strength are in our nerve, in our intelligence, and in our industry. We do not need the casualties of other nations to build us up. We ought to be lifted above any such feeling or thought as that. I know you may make it a matter of political calculation and political economy without being in sympathy with the distress of foreign nations; but take care that you let no miscreant selfishness mingle with your surmises and prognostications. It is for us, viewing the hideousness of these wars on other shores, to form in our minds a loftier ambition, and a clearer conception of what should be the ambition of every true statesman in America.

Has not the world seen enough of the war of violence? Has not God kept back this contiuent and settled it with a homogenous population, under common laws and a common constitution, and given it to us from shore to shore, and from the North to the South, with no neighboring nations that can interfere with or in any way change the tendency of things in our time, in order that we might build here a great nation for the liberty of the common people, on Christian foundations, and then give to the world an example of civic power with civic morality? If that is to be the duty of a republic, I am glad that New York is not a specimen of civic power, and that we are to look abroad upon the face of the whole nation, rather than upon any local sores—sores largely made by the drifting in of the detritus of foreign depravities.

But it is for us to desire for our own country, not magnitude, but *majesty;* not power, but *influence.* It is for us not to ask wealth, but to ask that a people, inevitably rich, multitudinous as the sands of the sea, organized by freedom so loosely that foreign dynasties do not believe there is any law or government here at all, should rise up in their unshackled freedom and present to the world a nation more happy, more pure, socially and politically, than any other nation on the globe. And then, in the might and majesty of our unmeasured power, having given token to the world of what terrible force there is, too, in our military power, let this nation stand and preach peace, that all the nations of the earth may see that real liberty among an intelligent and educated common people, leads not to lust and to greed, and to avarice of neighboring territories, and to despotism, but to humanity, to milder manners, to beneficent institutions, and to beneficence.

I plead, not that God would preserve this nation, for that is an answered prayer; I plead not that God would lay deep the keel and build

strong the ribs of this ship of state, for the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghanies are already his answer to that petition; I plead not that God would pile up riches in this land, for wealth has dropped down in our midst in floods, and is to come in yet greater streams; but I pray that there may be such a spirit of Christianity among the people, that, great as it is, vast as its power is, it may stand and look abroad, Christ-like, upon the nations, winning them to civilization; winning them to amenity of manners; winning them to true piety; winning them to that which shall redeem their homes from barbarism, that shall redeem the common people from oppression, and that shall make them strong in the Lord, until that bright and blessed day shall come, when we shall have no occasion to say to any man, "Know ye the Lord," but when *all shall know him from the least to the greatest.* God speed that day.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We desire to adore thee, our Heavenly Father, for thy justice, for thy truth, for thy love and mercy, and for all that we have known of them in our own experiences, and for all that which men have testified to, so that we know that thy government is, over all the earth, a government of goodness and mercy, and that the power which rules above is not tyrannical. We are not in the hands of a despot. Thou art our Father; and to all who will draw near to thee in love thou art ineffable in mercy and in goodness. Thou wilt bear with their weakness. Thou wilt show them the way. Though they stumble therein a thousand times, thou wilt lift them up. Thou wilt be patient with their wanderings, and bring them back again, so that they do not let thee go, but seek to serve thee with all their heart. Thou wilt forgive all their transgressions, and all their infirmities thou wilt help and succor with more than parental tenderness. Art not thou the God that we need, long suffering, and filled with goodness? Art not thou the God whom sinners need, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and yet that will by no means clear the guilty? We rejoice in thee. We rejoice that all the foundations of truth, and honor, and justice, are guaranteed by thee. Nor shall man's delinquency, nor any power infernal, overthrow the established order of virtue and rectitude. Forever and forever guarded and guided of God, they shall go on throughout the world, governing and to govern, until their mission is fulfilled, and justice shall have brought forth love, and all the universe shall be at peace and in joy.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant to us more and more perfect disclosures of this thy royal nature, that thy sovereignty may not seem something pressing upon us, something overwhelming our freedom; that we may behold in it all the guarantees of our liberty; that we may see that it is full of all love, and that it moves and administers for the purposes thereof.

And we pray that we may be won from selfishness; from pride; from every passion; from the lusts of the flesh; from all vanities and pomps that war against the soul; from everything that tarnishes the purity and lustre of thy nature in ours.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us how more and more to

refine our life and power; how to make it more spiritual; how to seal it with all the signets of immortality. We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may live more and more for the life to come; that our heart may be there, our treasure being there; that our affections may be set upon things above, and not upon things on the earth.

Forgive us all our sins, and teach us to forgive one another. By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, may we learn to be meek and gentle and forbearing to one another, and to be forgiving to one another, if we have offences one against another.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt grant thy blessing, this morning, to all that are in thy presence. To all that sit in darkness, bring light. To all that are in despondency or dispair, bring hope. To all that are in bereavements, bring strength and encouragement and comfort. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that none of us may repine when the hand of the Lord is laid in chastisement upon us. May we remember that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. And may we be prepared by chastisements so to grow in spiritual things, that, at last, when life itself shall depart, and all its visions and dreams give way, the glorious realities of thy kingdom shall come, where, because we have suffered with thee, we shall reign with thee.

And now we beseech thee to look upon thy cause everywhere. Have compassion, we pray thee, upon all those who are laboring in thy cause in destitute places, amidst discouragements and trials of their faith. May feeble churches be strengthened. May thy ministering servants, in the midst of sickness, and disappointments, and all manner of trials, still be girded with the strength of Almighty God. We pray that intelligence may prevail; that schools and colleges may come up in remembrance before thee; and that they may become sanctified fountains not only of learning but of grace.

We pray for the nations of the earth. Teach them to make war no more on one another. Bring in that day of purity and justice and truth when there shall be no use for war; when men shall learn the things that make for peace, and make for the welfare of one another.

Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in all the earth.

We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word spoken, and grant that it may do us good. May we ponder the way of thy providence, and the permissions thereof. May we look upon the distress of all nations; and may we pray and long that out of it shall come some knowledge that shall do other times good. If it be in accordance with thy wisdom, stay the hand of violence; but if the vials must be poured out, O Lord! let it be a short day. Let the thunder sound and cease. May thy lightning come, and return again to its sheath. And grant that the day may speedily come when men shall be lifted so far above selfishness and passion that there shall be no need of force, no need of chastisements, and no need of war.

And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and forever. *Amen.*

PATIENCE.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—HEB. X. 36.

The implication is, that many of those to whom the apostle wrote, consciously having performed their duty in the Lord, had not received any token or evidence of the fruit of the performance of duty, and were discouraged, and thought it perhaps a vain thing to attempt a religious life—reasoning in this way: "If we attempt any secular improvement we see that the work which we are performing grows under our hands. If I be a husbandman, I perceive, on sowing the seed, that there is use in it; for it springs up, and I have my harvests. If I am a vintner, I perceive, in my vines, and in the fruitage, that for which I labor. And even when I do not perceive at once the full fruit, I see the tokens of its coming, and all the steps by which it comes."

"Now," says the apostle, "ye that are spiritual husbandmen, as it were, have need of patience, after ye have done the will of God and nothing comes, until you receive the promise." It is recognized that there is a long space between the doing and the fulfilling, as there often is, and that that is the point where men specially need patience, and patience for the purpose of keeping up their faith in the reality of personal religion. For the context is this:

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Patience is not one of those stupid experiences which have been sometimes in vogue. It is not the grace of indifference or of laziness. Neither is it a kind of dogged obstinacy under difficulties. It is the sequence of enterprise and of endeavor, and is an act of self-control. It is the control of one's desires, either when he longs for gratification and has it not, or when he is under the pressure of suffering. It is the power of holding one's self calmly and contentedly under deprivations or under difficulties.

SUNDAY MORNING, July 24, 1870. LESSON: ROMANS XII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 40, 531, 1257.

It is another name, then, for self-control, and self-control under circumstances of suffering.

In the text, the teacher points to a very common experience—namely, impatience because labor does not bring forth its results immediately. Divine providence is conducting a double system in this world, or rather a single system with two developments. Constantly these two elements in it are clashing, by reason of men's misunderstandings; but they are coöperative and harmonious in the plan of God. There is a physical life in this world. We are grounded in that. We begin in that. It is the root of all our life. But out of that is to spring a still higher life; and the problem of living in this world is the development of that other and higher manhood out of that lower or physical manhood.

While this development is going on, we are the subjects of material laws. We are living in societies, under occupations, under governments; and we are obliged to carry ourselves with a wisdom which is adapted to the physical senses. Yet while we are doing this (we learn this first, and it is very apt to be the strongest impulse in us)—while we are doing this, there is, at the same time, to be carried on another development to which this is auxiliary, and for which this has been originally constituted—the unfolding of the higher spiritual life, which is so different from this lower one, that it is called a "new life" created by the spirit of God in man.

And although he that is living in the highest development of his spiritual life is living in a way which harmonizes him with all physical influences; on the other hand, a man may live so as to be in harmony with all physical laws, and yet not be developing his true spiritual life.

These two elements, which are going on together, induce a conflict and a misapprehension and a jar; and men are sacrificing their higher life for the sake of gaining this lower and physical life.

Thus we have this duality recognized all the way through—the life of the body and the life of the soul.

Now, our Father is conducting a providence which recognizes both of them, but subordinates them, keeping the lower low, and the higher supreme. He administers all the time among the infinite choices that are to be made in adapting his providence to his subjects. He is perpetually administering his government as we that are wise parents administer ours in the family. We take care of our children's bodies; of their food; of their dress; of their physical comfort. At the same time it is with reference to an ulterior manhood. And in every instance, if there is a choice in reference to truth-telling, purity, delicacy of mind and generosity of love, we teach the child to sacrifice the lower for the sake of keeping the higher. We are in our households carrying

on a duplex education, which is at its base physical and in its higher developments moral and social. And that which we are doing in the small, God is doing in the large sphere. And the human race are being developed at the bottom physically, and at the top spiritually.

We find a recognition of this matter in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, by a relative valuation of the two systems:

"We look not at the things which are seen [not at the sense-life], but at the things which are not seen [at the invisible, spiritual, immortal life]: For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

In other words, the apostle weighs the one world over against the other, and says the real and the most abiding is not that which is regarded by men as on the whole an imaginary and simply conceptional world. Most men, if they talk about substantial things, mean things that can be put into the scales and weighed. "It is bone, and blood, and flesh, and body, and matter, that is real," they say; "and the other things—the poetic and imaginary, the picturings, the beautiful things—well, yes, they are real in a sense.' But the apostle says, "The foundations are in the invisible; and they are eternal. This is the transient state; this is that which comes and goes, and is forever in mutation. He who once reaches this sphere, as from organized matter, becomes an intelligent being. He has risen, as from the clod; but as compared with the ultimate development, he has hardly begun to rise. For there is the manhood, there is the reality, there is the Saviour, and there is the eternity, out of sight—invisible."

There is, however, one element which runs through both parts of this providence; viz., the time element. In general, the time legitimately required for the accomplishment of an end, or the production of an effect, measures the value of that effect. Or, in other words, the things that you can do very quickly are usually of the least value; and the things which legitimately require the longest time in the doing, are the things that are of the most value. The presumptions, therefore, are that things which come quick are of small worth, and that all things that require a great deal of time, a history, involve in themselves elements of a greater value.

Physical qualities and physical objects are very near at hand. A man clears up a forest, and lays down his farm, and sees, from day-to-day, what he is doing. The spot where the sun goldens the ground grows larger from day-to-day. As he hews, and the chips fly at every stroke, and the log shapes itself at every blow, and the house goes up, timber by timber, or brick by brick, he sees, every night, what has been accomplished since morning. We raise our harvests in the same way. In the Spring, after a few days, we see the sprouting grass, as it were; and then, after a little, the growth and the development.

Much that we sow early in the Spring we reap again before the Spring is gone; much in early Summer; most in Autumn. The distance between the establishment of the cause and the reaping of the effect is very short in physical things; and we can see, from hour to hour, from week to week, from month to month, or from year to year, the results of our work. The lowest sphere is the place where we can quickest realize the fruits of our labor. This is the place where the least time is required for effects to show themselves. It is here that the thing sought follows most immediately on volition. It is here that cause and effect stand most closely together. As when you touch powder to fire, there is an instantaneous explosion, so there is the greatest instantaneity between cause and effect the lower down you go toward base matter. And the higher you go above base matter, the wider is the interval between cause and effect.

Next above the physical department of life is the intellectual. This is far higher. I will not show the intermediate steps between the two. The training, for instance, of our reasoning faculties, and the product in the use of them, require a much longer period of time than the drilling of the hand or of the foot. A man can learn to use a tool far sooner than he can learn to invent a tool. A man can learn to use his body in a day or two; or in a few weeks; or in a few months; and, in complex trades, in a few years; but a man does not learn how to make use of his intellectual faculties in that length of time. And we call it the education, the drawing out, the developing of our faculties, and the teaching them comprehensive philosophy—the knowledge of how to use themselves so that they shall control the natural globe. This is a slower work. While the education of the body speeds very rapidly, the education of the mind takes long, long years. And the intellect is certainly very much higher than the muscle, or the bone. And so you see that this time-element increases in proportion to the value of the thing developed. Longer waiting there is to be between effect and cause as you rise in the scale.

If we regard the perception of the beautiful, the fine, and the harmonious, as a higher development of the intellectual, or as dependent on a yet higher class of faculties, we shall find that this test which I have employed is still true; viz., that no man can produce the beautiful (the beautiful in truth, I mean) half as fast as he can the lower elements. In other words, truth, in its higher and finer elements, is a product that requires more time for development than truth in its lower forms. The æsthetic is higher than the simply intellectual; and no man works in the sphere of the æsthetic without being obliged to work with long waiting. The space is wider between the seed-sowing and the harvest-reaping. The effects are more difficult to be produced,

and the number that can with any facility produce them is fewer, than in the foregoing departments. Indeed, in some of the highest developments of the æsthetic element, only an elect few are found who have any power of development. And the interval between what is conceived and the effect, is longer than in the intellectual realm.

But moral qualities stand higher than even the intellectual and artistic in their higher forms. Love (not that instinct which comes to all, but spiritual love, comprehensive, discriminating, fine), joy (not that giggling joy of the senses, but the inspiration of the spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost, that high and blessed enjoyment which comes with faith and with hope)—love; joy; peace; faith; gentleness; goodness; truthfulness—how few there are that possess these! How rare is it to see men who are fully armed with them! And where they *are* possessed, how long a discipline it was that produced them! The few great men who have been so marked by the power of the higher moral qualities that they have left an impression on the world, are men who went through long periods of scourgings, persecutions, sufferings, all manner of disciplines, before they rose to any dynamic form or condition of these higher moral qualities. A man can teach himself to think; but how many men can teach themselves to be at peace. A man's will may coërce his industry; but how many men have had the power of will to coërce their joy? A man can make himself mighty where might means muscle, or perseverance, or temper, or aggressive force in any form; but how many men can by any volition clothe themselves with spiritual might, so that they shall be spiritually powerful among their fellow men? It is a long trial that makes strong, impetuous, rude, harsh, cruel men gentle—sweetly gentle—voluntarily gentle.

How long it takes to subdue power to humility! How long it takes to turn a man's self-esteem into a patronizing magnanimity! How long it takes to transform man's native conception that he is born and built for his own using, into the conception that he is born and built to use himself for others, *in honor preferring others, and pleasing others to their edification!*

As you go higher, the work is more difficult. It is larger, it is finer, and the period of time between the starting and the ending is longer. The journey between a man's volition and his higher moral traits, is a very long one, ordinarily speaking.

If it is right to distinguish a state still higher on the scale than this of moral quality, and call it the *spiritual state*, as contrasted with the moral and ethical (and I think there is such a higher degree), that will be found to be the quality the period between whose cause and effect will be the longest—and indeed generally so long that the rising of the star

thereof may be seen, but not the setting. The causes, for the most part, operate in this life, and the effects, for the most part, are delayed until the life which is to come. So that the highest class of effects which we seek, we seek patiently all through this world; but we never see more than intimations of the fulfillment that is to come ripely, richly, after we enter a better clime.

Here, then, is a brief delineation of this spiritual law of growth and labor. I will make some applications of it.

1. In a new religious life, all reformations which are physical in their nature should be speedy. A great many persons, because they hear men declaring, in describing Christian influence, that growth in grace is a gradual process, say, "Well, it is. Lying and stealing and drunkenness are to be gradually put down. Although I am a Christian, I admit that I do steal a little yet; but then, my minister tells me that progress in the new life is slow; that there is a great journey between the cause and the effect." But we ought not to reason thus. Reformation has relation to the lowest sphere in which a man acts—to animal, bodily things; to all those things which relate to the flesh. In these things there is but a short space between cause and effect, and all reformations that involve the body, or the bodily appetites, are to be immediately wrought. Evils in this sphere are to be cured at once. Absolute and total discontinuance is the law for the flesh. There is to be no wide space here between the beginning and the ending. Where the nature of the quality is of the earth earthy, where it is a reformation of morals, the effects produced are to be immediate, instantaneous; results are to be arrived at and reached without delay. Not that the tendency to evil will be obliterated at once, but the yielding to that tendency must not be continued. "Let him that stole, steal no more"--not once—not a single time. Let him that lied, lie no more. Let him that drank, drink no more. Let him that lusted, lust no more. Whatever may be the heaving of the ground as with eternal volcanic forces, let there be no eruptions—no disclosures. A man who begins a Christian life must recollect that, so far as the body is concerned, the law is, that there is but a very short space between cause and effect in the lower elements of it.

2. But the strictly religious elements go on. These are the elements of negation—those which involve leaving off and not doing. The moment you enter upon the sphere of the higher elements of religious experience, which is the sphere of change or development, the results cannot be immediate. The term between cause and effect will vary in duration with the peculiar advantages which different persons have; with the peculiar susceptibilities of different persons; with the intensity of inspiration which is brought to bear upon them, and

under which they are called to act; yet growth in grace is, in the nature of things, a gradual growth. Every single step upward implies and requires the harmonization of all the elements below in a man's nature, and in his surroundings; and that often is comprehensive and very difficult. Not only is all growth in grace gradual which implies development of the higher nature, but you must make up your mind that you will oftentimes set in operation courses which will finally fulfill themselves and disclose beneficial effects. You will set them in operation; and then you will have to wait a great while before you come to the result. And you are not to be discouraged because in laboring for spiritual qualities you do not find them as soon as you could wish.

You say to yourself, "When I began a Christian life, I seemed to grow very fast. It seemed to me that every day I could see some improvement. But I have gone on four or five years, and it seems to me that I have come to a stop. I do not see that I make any improvement at all, now." Well, you do not recognize the fact that when you began, the steps which you had to make were for the most part physical steps, and that the law of disclosure in the physical realm is rapid; and that when you have passed from that realm and come to the higher elements in the realm of larger Christian development, you have come into a sphere where the law is, that there must be a wider space between cause and effect; that there is more time required to ripen the fruit; that a longer summer is necessary for the various stages of development?

And so a man ought not to be discouraged. I do not mean that a man in his dissipation may not pervert this truth; but those who are conscientious and earnest about a Christian life, need not be discouraged because they do not get along as fast as they did in the beginning, provided the qualities which they are attempting to take on are the higher qualities. For these qualities require long drill; and he who attains to them must go through a great deal of practice. A man cannot say to his temper what he can say to his body. A shrew, being converted, can hold her hand so as not to beat the child. And a little later she can control her tongue, so as not to scold the servant, perhaps. And by-and-by she can manage her temper; but that takes much longer. And at last she develops a spontaneous emotion of kindness where before there was temper; and that takes longer yet. But still, there is a regular progress all the way up. And although there seems to be but little progress made, many persons actually cover a sphere so much wider, and there is so much contained in the little which they do, that they really, in the sight of God, are lifted far higher than they are in their own sight, because they are always looking to see physical re-

sults—results that the eye can measure, or that the outward senses can recognize, instead of the hidden elements of moral excellence.

Many of the experiences of human life—its sorrows, its aspirations, its self-denials, its severe tasks—are ripening elements in us that will not appear in any individuality and distinctness at first, or until late in life. Many persons go under the cloud, and think that they shall come out all right on the other side. As a man, going into a bath, soiled and heated, comes out from the refluent wave cleansed and cool; so men think they shall go through troubles and trials, which are God's great baths for the soul, and that they shall come out speedily on the other side, and that they shall recognize that they have been improved. But where God is dealing with our higher nature, we are assured by the Apostle Paul, he is *dealing with us as with sons.* "Now are we the sons of God," says the Apostle John. And if we are the sons of God, Paul declares, reasoning on this very same theme, God will deal with us by chastisements. And he tells us that our faith is not to fail because, when we have taken such and such steps, and fulfilled the will of God, the answer does not come. We have need of patience, after we have done the will of God, before we reach the results. God is dealing with men by difficulties, by tasks, by bereavements, by sorrows, by trials, to prove the higher part of their nature.

Give me, now, a bit of wax, and see how soon I will take it in my hand and mould it into any form that I want. Give me a bit of alabaster, and I cannot work that as I can the wax, because it is harder. Give me a bit of marble and that must be cut more slowly. But give me a diamond, rough and rude, and tell me to cut the faces on that, by which it shall reflect all the rays of light and show its hidden powers of beauty, and it is a long task. Yet though it is a long task to cut a diamond, when it is once cut it is worth all the labor that it has cost. Wax is quickly done, but it is of very little use after it is done. A diamond, on the other hand, is long in doing, and once done it lasts forever.

Now, the lower developments that men gain in this world—industry and frugality and skill of hand—are gained comparatively soon, and they are comparatively in the lower range; but those higher elements, where men really touch God, and where their morality begins to blossom, and where they begin to find the first intimations of their own true manhood, and where they begin to know the life that is to have no death, and no intermediate sleep, but is to flame and glow in the presence of God—those elements God works out slowly. They come under a law which requires a long period of time for their development.

We are not, therefore, to suppose that God is angry with us be-

cause we have blow upon blow, and grinding upon grinding, and stroke upon stroke, day after day. He *deals with us as with sons.*

How little we know about this! How little we know what is being done to us! How little we know concerning ourselves at any rate! How one day it is all clear inside! and how the next day it is like a stormy sky outside, all clouds, all doubts, all uncertainty. "Now," says the apostle, "are we the sons of God"—he was sure of that—"and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We do not know what *being the sons of God* means. We do not know how that is going to open up; we do not know what the disclosures are going to be; we do not know the glory, the beauty, the joy, the fullness and the power of it. It is station, rank, dignity, connection; but we do not know what any of those things are. We only know that when we see Him as He is, we shall be satisfied. It will be enough. We do not know what God is bringing us to. We do not understand the pattern and shape in which we are being fashioned. All we know is, that God is bringing us through trouble, and, if we bear it bravely and patiently, we know that He is dealing with us as with sons, and that we are going on to the mysterious grandeur and character of divinity. We know that we were born out of the dust; and that we are rearing an imperfect manhood; and that we are carrying it on through the economy of grace and providence in this world; and that at last death shall cut us away from the stalk where we have ripened the seed and the cluster; and that we shall go on, freed from the passions and the animal economy, and from that which becomes in the higher state a limitation and obstruction of the spiritual nature. But we know very little of all that. There is a great part of God's providence that must always be mysterious to us—for that is the term by which we speak of ignorance.

In laboring for others, therefore, we ought to bear in mind this principle, that perpetually we are to carry along together both the physical and the moral development of the world; and that he who lays out his work so as to see the result as he goes along, must, of necessity, be a low worker. Nobody sees the results of what he is doing unless he is working very low down. He that sees at the end of the day all that he has done during the day, has done very little. He that is a true worker is always throwing effects over beyond himself to which he will not come for months, or for years, it may be. A man who plants lettuce may plant it to-day, and, if it be rainy and warm, he may perhaps to-morrow see that it has sprouted; and he may in two or three weeks eat it. But it is only lettuce. A man who plants acorns does not run out the next morning to see what they have done. He does not expect to see any signs of their growth until

weeks and months have passed. It is not until they have lain under ground all winter long, and been mellowed by the frosts, that they begin to sprout. And if the next summer they grow six inches high they do well. And after twenty years they will not be much higher than your head. And after fifty years they will only be small trees. But after a hundred years have gone by, they will be fit for ships, and will stand for centuries. It takes time for oak trees to grow; but it does not take very much time for mushrooms to grow. And yet, there are many who measure what they are doing by what they can report. They go out with garrulity in the morning, and come back with statistics at night. You can tell exactly where such folks work, and how they work. But he who has faith and insight, and on whom the power of God rests, and who is working, not for the low and material, but for the spiritual and everlasting, very soon finds out that he puts forth an amount of strength altogether disproportioned to the results which he beholds. There is a desire, there is a thought, there is a will-power, there is a labor, that has no sort of return in proportion to what it has done; and he grows discouraged, and thinks he has thrown his efforts away. But no, he is working in directions which, according to the everlasting law of God, require time. And he is a true worker who, after he has done the will of God, has patience till he receives the promised reward—the legitimate effect.

This comes home to parents. There are parents who say, "How much I have labored with that child! and with what discouraging results! There are my neighbors—they have no trouble at all with their children; but my children, it seems to me, are bound to the gallows or the jail." Now, you take a child that is knit from single threads; take a child that has no particular force, and that is reasonably well balanced, and it is not hard to bring him up; for a little effort here and there is sufficient to turn him. A man can put his hand at the spout of a watering-pot and turn the stream here, or there, or any where; but let a man turn Niagara with his hand if he can.

Here is a child that has intensity in him. He has big basilar, big intermediate and coronal forces; and all these forces are undeveloped; and the parent does not understand the child. He is like one that is throwing missiles over into a garden whose walls are so high that he cannot see what they hit. The instruction that the parent throws into the child sometimes has the desired effect, and sometimes does not. And after a few years it seems to the parent as though he never could do anything with the child, he is so wayward and inconstant. He is not a Sunday-school boy at all. He is not fit to have his life written and put into a library. But he is just as nimble as a grasshopper. He runs and jumps first, and then considers where he lands.

He fills the house full of misrule and disturbance. And the most amusing thing of the whole is, to see the mother moaning and grieving and worrying about the child. The child would do very well if the mother would let it alone. Let her wait. It takes a great while to unfold a nature, if it be a large nature. Have patience. Believe and understand that the lower things can be speedily done; but that the intermediate affections require a long time for their development; and that the higher moral nature requires a still longer time. Have faith in God. Work, work, and wait! Do not remit any work; but the worry—remit that.

And in laboring for classes, and individuals belonging to classes, in parishes and communities, we are to remember that while we can do a great deal, the results of which will appear at once, yet there is a great deal that we can do without seeing any immediate results. We can get up schools, and build exterior churches, and organize benevolent societies, and do a thousand other physical things, and measure the progress of our work as we go along; but the moment we attempt to take a whole community, with their mixed dispositions, and peculiar educations, and in the midst of all the diverse influences that are playing upon them, for one, and against another, and lift them up to a higher level, we find, especially if they have been abused, maltreated and wrongly educated, that they are knotted and tied up in different ways.

A man may think that if he lives to the age of Methuselah, and labors for the reformation of the community in which he lives, he ought to see it thoroughly changed. If he thoroughly changes the community in which he lives, even by living to so great an age as that, he does a quick work. Pyramids may be built and forgotten before you can build up a community into the higher forms of spiritual wisdom and purity. Only once or twice in the whole history of the world have there been conjunctions even in which single sections lived in such a way as to rise to a high degree of moral and spiritual perfection. And men who labor for the elevation of the masses are apt to become discouraged. They sow seed, and then look for the result, and do not see the fruit which they expected. They sow expecting to reap angels, and look, and do not see them. And then they are discouraged. They think that the Lord has not called them, and that it is of no use for them to work.

Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the reward; and the better your work is, the more surely will it bring forth fruit.

Do not take what I have been saying, for your comfort, old lazy hunks, stupid, indolent waiter on God, who do nothing, and say that

you are waiting for the final results. Not for you am I preaching this discourse. But all ye that labor; all ye that have soul-throes; all ye that tarry at prayer for those whom you love; all ye that have laid on you the burden of the Lord, and go, as Paul did, in travail until men are born again in Christ, take this comfort to yourselves, that the work which you are doing is a work which cannot in the nature of things be done in a hurry. And when you die you will find that your work will follow you. That which you have begun will not be completed for generations. If I have been a good workman, my work will go on fulfilling itself, and my part of it will not be completed in a hundred years. And if I stand in heaven, in the infinite love and mercy of my Saviour, I shall see coming up, in long sequence, the results of things which I began—the fruits of the seeds which I sowed. Their blossoms shall be sweet and fragrant centuries hereafter in the heavenly land. He who has faith to work for the invisible, shall, when he draws near to the other life, and more and more as he comes into the influence of that higher sphere (for, as we work, if we do nothing else, we reproduce in ourselves, more or less, the very qualities which we are seeking to infix in others) gain an insight into, a perception of, this blessed truth.

And so, hard-working brethren—ye that have borne the burden and heat of the day—when the word comes, "Cast aside, now, your workmen's garments, change your implements, come up hither," you will have been prepared, by working, to do better work. And in the higher sphere, when you rise and come into the presence of God, and see what manhood means, all your discouragements will pass away.

I think there will be some laughing in heaven. Unless there is, there is no use of laughing. I think men will laugh when they look back and see how many things that they thought were troubles, were not troubles. I think men will laugh when they look back and see what things seemed to them cares and burdens. I think men will laugh when they look back and see what things scared them.

I remember, once, when I was threading a Western forest, that as, at twilight, I came toward a little opening, I saw a man lurking on the edge of the forest, with a rifle drawn at me. Although I was a really brave man, my blood ran cold. There I was, sitting up on the horse, a fair mark for a man that was standing and taking deadly aim at me; and I was at a great disadvantage. I did not laugh, for I had not got over my shock, when I came up to the spot and found, instead of a man with a rifle, only a tree with a branch pointing toward me; but afterwards I laughed, to think what I had been so frightened at, and what a shock it sent through me.

When men get to heaven, and find what many of those things were which stood aiming at them in this life; when they find what sort

of make-believe dangers those were which threatened them, I think they will laugh. There will be a revelation and a revolution there, when we shall no longer see men as trees walking, but when we shall be as God, and see him as he is—not through a glass, darkly, but face to face. How then, will all things be changed! And we shall look back on the vision of life, and all its fantastic imaginings, with wonder and gladness—with sorrow for ourselves, but with joy and gratitude to God, who brought us through the dangers of the way, and finally saved us.

Brethren, be patient. Do the will of God, aim high, work hard; and then have patience. By-and-by the reward will come. Wait. If you have to wait till you get it in heaven, it will be there. No man shall do anything in this world and lose his reward. First or last it shall come to harvest.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We acknowledge thee to be our God, O thou most High! Our Father and our God, thou hast redeemed us from sin, and art redeeming us from the love of it. Thou hast awakened in us a new life which is reaching up toward thine; and we are becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus. And though the work be long we discern not its progress, nor its symmetry, nor its harmony, nor its fruit, but only its promise. And we wait with patience to discern by-and-by, and in a fairer clime, what that seed shall bring forth which thou hast planted in our hearts. Yet, on the way we rejoice. We discern enough to fill us with hope. We reach forward, content and patient, believing that thou wilt reveal, in thine own time, the fullness of thy work, and that in heaven it shall appear what we shall be, though not here. Now we see through a glass, darkly. Then we shall see face to face. It is mysterious here. We are ignorant, and thou hast not taught us. We know not the meaning of much that happens. Our own sufferings fill us with surprise; and we do not know how to direct them so that they shall be profitable to us. And we find ourselves striving, often vainly, with elements that have not sprung from our will. We meet strange providences. We behold, as it were, mighty influences at work, and crossing our path—sometimes dark, and sometimes light; and we are afraid of them. And we are as little children set adrift upon a sea whose currents they do not understand, and cannot control, and swept hither and thither, not according to their wish, but according to the will of the immediate influences round about them. And yet, there is a guiding Hand. There is an Eye that slumbers not, nor sleeps. And though on the sea of life we are drifted, so far as we are concerned, by irresistible influences, all things are possible to thee, and thou art guiding us, and thou art overcoming the evil tendencies for us, and shaping us, and all our voyage, to the final estate of blessedness.

We desire, O Lord our God, to trust thee. We desire not to judge thee by our lower reason, which cannot reach up unto thine. We see the ends of thy ways, as if they were let down to us; and looking up we behold but the lower link of the chain. Above, up to thine hand, is all hidden.

We rejoice that thou art supreme, and that in thee is our hope. Because

thou livest, we shall live also. And in this hope we are patient in tribulation, and we bear our labor, and endure our care, and go on, waiting contentedly until the word shall come, and we shall be permitted to go home. Grant that we may have this saving sense of thy presence with us all the way. May we have this fruition. If we cannot come to feel a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus toward which we are tending, may we at least have the shadow of that manhood resting upon us. May we discern thee every day, and always, and rejoice in thee when we cannot rejoice in ourselves. Bless us in our service to-day together; in our fellowship one with another; in our affections. Sanctify our joys at home. Sanctify to us all our experiences. May we bear whatever thou in thy providence seest fit to put upon us, with equanimity and with patience. And grant that we may go on thus to the end of life, proving ourselves indeed thy children.

Bless all congregations that are assembled to-day. May thy servants who preach the Gospel be clothed with power from on high, and be enabled to preach with sincerity and with truth.

We pray that thou will grant that the truth may be spread abroad throughout our land, and throughout the world. When shall the day come when slavery shall cease everywhere! When shall the day come when ignorance and superstition and irreligion shall pass away? Hasten the day when men shall be cruel to men no longer; when wars shall no longer desolate; when all the earth shall be ripened into true holiness.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word spoken; and grant that we may have courage to go on again for ourselves, in our own dispositions; in our households, for our children; in our schools and classes, for those committed to our charge; in the world at large. May we not doubt nor measure dangers or successes by the lower rules of life. May we live by faith. May we have thy higher and nobler judgment. Being near thee, may we borrow something of thy wisdom, to illuminate the doubful path of experience, until the shadows depart, and thou dost become our Teacher in the heavenly land; where we will praise thee, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

"MY YOKE IS EASY."

"And his commandments are not grievous."—1 JNO., V. 3.

The whole passage is this:

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."

This is contrary to the popular impression. If by *keeping his commandments* is meant the leading of a religious life, then it countervails a very widely prevalent feeling, that though a religious life may be more honorable, and more safe, and ultimately more profitable, and by-and-by, in its own way, more joyful, yet, in its inception, for the most part, in this world, it is grievous, and that it is fitly said to be a yoke, to be a restraint of liberty. And as "religion" means binding, restraining, tying up, so men are apt to feel, not perhaps with any etymological information on that subject, but from other sources which I shall mention, that a religious life is not an easy one, and is not, on the whole, to be compared, for freedom or joyousness, with a natural life, provided that that natural life is pleasurable, and is conducted with a reasonable degree of consideration and moderation.

But here we have an appeal substantially made to our reason, in this matter. The declaration that the commandments of God on which we are to stand are not grievous, is substantially an argument propounded; and we are at liberty to reason it.

I remark, then, in the first place, that a religious life—by which we mean a life based upon the supreme commands of God, as they are revealed in Scripture—is not grievous, in that it does not require of man artificial duties, but is, in the highest and best sense of the term, the requirement of that which is natural.

We are not required either to do or to forbear things which are not in accordance with our organization—our physical, social and moral organization. We are not put to do things which are difficult as requiring us to turn aside any of our faculties, or to task them unduly, according to their nature.

On the other hand, we are not required to fulfill artificial obligations and duties. This was not always so. It could scarcely have

SUNDAY EVENING, July 31, 1870. The last service before the summer vacation. LESSON: ISA. XXVI. 1-9. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1321, 905, 1251.

been said under the Mosaic economy, "His commandments are not grievous,"—are not burdensome; because the worship which was ordained by Moses for the people of Israel was a burdensome worship. Experience shows that in time it became too burdensome; and not only that, but that it could not be carried on without so distracting men from the natural to the artificial that they would go to the artificial in distinction from the natural—the *true* natural.

Now, as interpreted by Christ, religion does not stand in any forms whatever, nor in any special philosophical faiths. It certainly requires our belief in the existence of a God. It requires that we should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It requires faith and trust and obedience. But it does not require that we should believe in one church or another church. It does not require that we should believe in the creed of one church as distinguished from the creed of another church. And still less does it impose upon us onerous fasts. Nor does it require of us the observance of multiplied days. It has absolutely nothing to do with methods. It leaves those to a man's own discrimination. Religion requires simply this: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.* Devout love and disinterested benevolence—these are what religion requires of every man. And how he shall come to these; how each man in his particular circumstances shall practice them—that is left for the co-ordinated wisdom of men to find out.

The command is not grievous in this, that it says, "So many days; so many readings of the Bible; so many prayers; so many fasts; so many confessions; so many duties of this or that kind, either of avoidance or performance." There is nothing of that. All artificial elements are swept out of the Word of God; and the command stands simply in respect to the great essential naturals. We are to have a "conscience void of offence." We are to have a reason that shall be parallel with the great truths which God has revealed in his Word, and is revealing in his providence. We are to have a heart that shall be sensitive. We are to live with a love that shall be supreme toward God, and unselfish toward men.

These are the commands of God, and these are commands of things that are natural, and not artificial. The external forms of religion may have an importance; but still they are not of such importance that if one take them or reject them it will make any difference in the sight of God.

A man may sit with the quiet Quaker, and absolutely refuse all physical exposition and form; or he may sit with the sonorous Methodist, and demand that there shall be the utmost latitude of expression, but of nothing more; or he may sit with the High Churchman, and re-

quire that every single thing in religion shall have a symbolism, and that men shall go through processions, and observe days, and wear garments, and have all manner of liturgical forms. That is your liberty —not your necessity. Any man can do it that wants to, and that profits by it; and no man need do it who does not want to. That will make no difference, so that a man shall land in Jerusalem. He may go to it from the north, or he may go to it from Joppa, on the west, or he may go to it from Syria, on the east. He may take whatever road he pleases. Some roads are much more pleasant than others; but he may go over the mountain, or through the gorge; he may go upon the traveled way or across the wilderness; he may act his own pleasure about how he goes; only let his feet at last stand in Zion, and before God.

The commands of God are, not that we shall do so many things, and do them so often, and observe such days, and have such a form of belief, and such church ordinances. A great many men think so. A great many men think that when they are attempting to be religious there is but one way, and that that way is to join the church, and ask the church what it says; and they think that the church stands in the place of God, and that they are to listen to its voice, and that they are religious when they obey it. No; the commandments respect the great fundamental original faculties of our nature; and we are commanded simply to carry them up and out in obedience to God. That is our duty. How we are to fulfill these commandments is a matter of indifference, so that we come to the right results—the fruits of love.

Now, it is not grievous to ask men to conform to their own nature. It is not grievous—it is rational; it is right—to demand that an eagle shall fulfill the duties of the organization which God gave it. It is right that the dove should be a dove, and come up to its nature. It is right that the ox should fulfill the ox's nature. It is right that the little singing bird should fulfill its nature. It is right that men should fill out and have the full exercise of their nature. This is the characteristic element of manhood. The moral development of man is manhood; and all below that is animalhood, which we have in common with the brute creation.

All our duties, then, are in accordance with our nature. They are in accordance, not, perhaps, with what men have been accustomed to call *nature;* because mostly men have given that name to their lower or passional nature. We therefore are said to have a lost or fallen nature—a corrupt nature; and we are cautioned against trusting it. And in that sense this artificial nature—that which has come to be our nature more properly—we ought not to esteem. We ought not to trust it. Our character is deplorable as measured by the divine law.

But our natural endowments—that is to say, those more elemental faculties which God gave us—stand. And the duty of religion is simply that we shall find out what faculties these are, and go back to them, and live in accordance with the original indications of the divine law in the creation of man. And no man can, on philosophical grounds, say that it is a grievous command that a man should be true to himself, true to the best part of himself—in other words, that he should subordinate his lowest self to his higher and nobler self.

Nor are we put under any commandments for the sake of another's benefit, but really and truly for our own. It is true that we owe obligation to God. It is true that we are in that sense indebted. It is true that we, as his creatures, and tied to him by innumerable benefits, ought, for His sake, to love and to obey. Yet it is really for our own sakes that He commands love and obedience. "All things," says the apostle, "are for your sakes." And God commands us to love one another for our own sakes. There are many governments that are very hard to bear, that are operose and burdensome, partly because they command things which are for the benefit of the government, but not for the benefit of the governed. The Turkish government over its subjected Greek provinces is a most burdensome government. The Roman government was a most exacting and a most hard-hearted and hard-handed government. The old Roman spirit was not simply bellicose, but it was despotic in all the after administrations in its provinces. And men were required to do things, not that would make themselves richer and happier and better. The idea of making a State strong by making each individual citizen more prosperous, had not then entered into the conception of legislators, or of governors themselves. The idea was to make the governing hand omnipotent; to make the imperial government rich and strong. It was to give the ruling authority absolute control over all provinces. Therefore taxes were levied, services were required, punishments were threatened and executed, lawless administrations were established throughout all the Roman dynasty, that were not for the benefit of the governed, but were only for the benefit of the governors.

There is absolutely nothing of this in the divine administration. That is paternal. Neither is there in it any of that lingering selfishness which belongs to all earthly paternal government. It is disinterested, it is more than disinterested, it is self-sacrificing paternity. For God is He who so loved the world, gross, sunk in sin and in barbarity, that He gave His own second self—His own Son—to die for us, while yet we were his enemies.

It is not therefore the requisition of an exacting paternity; it is the government of love—of household love—of love whose central philos-

ophy is the philosophy of domesticity. It is that government which is imposed upon us for our sakes, to make us wiser and nobler, and freer, and stronger. And we shall find almost transports of exclamation in various parts of the apostolic teaching, particularly of Paul's.

I do not wonder when I consider what the Pharisee had to go through, how he was tied up, what notions he had of the narrow bounds that he walked in, that when those bounds were enlarged his religion was not destroyed, but he had more a God than he had before, and a more impressive sense of obligation than he had before, and such a freedom as he had never had before, and such joyousness and enthusiasm as he never had before, as was the case with Paul when he was converted—I do not wonder, when I consider these things, that the apostle spoke of himself as having come out of bondage into liberty. I do not wonder that he triumphed, in writing to the Galatians, saying that they had become free men. I marvel not at these things, because there is nothing in the world so free as love. That levels all distinctions. That makes all duties choices. That makes bitter things sweet, and turns all juices to sugar. That takes all heat from the sun in overmeasure. That makes all ways flowery ways. Love enough, and there springs summer out of the very bosom of winter. Love enough, and all things become easy.

Now, the divine government is this: "Thou shalt love." If there is anything more, it is, "Thou shalt love with all thy heart." If there is anything more, it is, "Thou shalt love with all thy mind and strength." First, and second and third, and last, it is, "Thou shalt love." And of all experiences, none is more blessed, none is freer, none is more exhilarating, than this divinest experience of love.

And if it be so when the taper is lit in the lower affections, and as between unworthy natures, so little susceptible of creating any deep affection or any great admiration one for the other, what should be the magic throb of that love kindled in our bosom, when it is the mighty God that stands over against us, and offers himself with impunity, and is our very Suitor, giving his power of heart to the wilderness and barrenness of our hearts! I marvel not that He says, "Thou shalt love me with all thy heart, and soul, and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." And such a commandment is not grievous: it is very joyous.

These commandments, I remark once more, are the only roads to full, comprehensive and enduring happiness. We have wandered out of the way. We have, in ignorance partly, and in wilfulness partly, formed habits of living contrary to our best nature. And every man feels the discord. For though men may dispute about theology, they seldom dispute about experience. If you ask

them, "Is there never a turbulent irruption of your passions into your affections? Do they never soil you? Is there never rebellion in your case, so that your reason stands on one side, and your disobedient affections and passions on the other? Are not all your expectations of what is right and good one way, and your will the other? Is not your life spent mostly in breaking what you know to be right commandments, and the little that remains of it in a pitiful sorrowing which does not work repentance, nor much change? Are you not yourself satisfied that you are perpetually violating your best ideals of life and of duty?" It will not do for a man to look at himself too much. A journalizing of every man's experience from day-to-day, and a contrasting it with the true ideal of a manly life, would strike despair through any soul. It is only by hiding and forgetting it that men can rise above despondency into true enjoyment.

Men are living so as to abate happiness. Not that sinful men may not be happy. That I do not doubt. Not that there is not enjoyment in things that are wrong. There is enjoyment in things that are wrong. Not that sin does not pay. It does pay. But it is a poor price that it pays, and a price that is delusive at last. It pays wages that are very quickly squandered. It pays, to be sure; but it wears out the man who takes the pay. The wages of sin are death, in the end. In the first place, the wages of sin are what buds are, that promise blossoms. They delight for the instant by their sweetness. They are like the book that the Revelator saw, which was sweet in his mouth, and bitter in his belly. Sin is sweet in the mouth, and bitter in digestion. It lies hard on the stomach. Sin has present remuneration. And nothing can be more foolish than to tell children and men that there is no pleasure in sin. Do you suppose that the world would ever have gone agog after sinful things if there had been no pleasure in them. There is pleasure in them.

The thief has a pleasure of excitement in stealing. Even the robber has some sort of pleasure in striking down his victim. The miser has his curmudgeonish pleasure. There is pleasure in the cup, in the song, and in the dance. All these things have their pleasure; but they are consuming the susceptibility of pleasure from other sources, by their concentration of intense excitements. Coarse pleasures have a brief period, and then they leave the soul in a wilderness. There is nothing remaining to it.

A great place, the soul is. Ample provision is made in it for enjoyment. But he who lives for the senses takes only one single kind of enjoyment, and so employs that that it destroys all the rest.

Now the duty imposed upon us by God, is, that we shall use ourselves according to our nature, and according to God's command-

ments, which are based on his own everlasting, immutable nature, so that every part of us shall be concordant with itself, concordant with natural law, and concordant with moral law. And so every part of the soul becomes vocal with joy. And it is a joy that has this peculiarity, that it is lowest and least in the beginning; that it quietly increases in volume; that it is more and more vocal at times when all ordinary joys begin to shrink and are silent; that it waxes amain when other powers and faculties cease to go; that it triumphs in that hour when heart and flesh fail; and that when death annihilates the common joys of men, it is but an emancipator of the joys which we have when we serve God according to his commandments.

Why, then, is it, that men think that religion is a grievous thing, that it is gloomy and hard? If, in this brief exposition of the essential nature of religion, we see that it conforms to our organization, conforms to the world in which we dwell, conforms to our present needs, and augments as we go on in life, preparing us for the life which is to come, why should men have derived so very different an idea of it? Because men have very largely had presented to them the machinery of religion, instead of religion. It has been as if a farmer should present to you plows, crowbars, harrows, carts, wagons, spades, shovels, rakes, all manner of utensils, and they should produce the impression on you that those were the only apples and pears that there were on the farm. Men look at Sunday. That is a tool or instrument. They look at the church. That is nothing but a machine-shop. The church is a mere mechanical arrangement by which men may be educated in knowledge, and receive an impulse in the right direction. But it is not religion.

Why, is the old mill, that goes clattering night and day on the stream, bread? Would you gnaw a millstone? or, would you marvel, if you did, that you still hungered? Men have had presented Sundays, and churches, and all manner of church economies, which I honor, and some parts of which I observe, and which I certainly do not dissuade you from observing; but I want you to understand that they are all of them man-made, and all of them mere conveniences, simple methods by which we help ourselves to get that which is behind them, and is different from them, and is not produced by them—namely, the religious element.

But where men have heard churches disputing—this church up, and that down; this church broad, and that narrow; this church high, and that low; where men have gone about and seen churches, some with steeples towering above others; some with this church economy, and some with that; some with this platform, and some with that, they have become bewildered, and have said, "If that is religion, I do not know

but I am about as well off without it as I would be with it, ordinarily." And when men look at the church, and see what they do see; when they see the disagreement which there is between the members of churches themselves; when they see all sorts of worldlings and disreputable men calling themselves Christians, they get a very vague idea of what religion really is. And looking at the mass of those who pass as religious, it is not marvellous to me that men should say, "This is grievous business. I may come to it yet; I do not want to be lost; I will take any medicine rather than be lost; but it is a hard dose." I should feel very much as they do under the same circumstances. If religion were presented to me as that mere externality which many men are impressed that it is; if those things which are called religion were presented to me, and I were told that they were all that there was of religion, I would reject them. I would not take them. They are not soul-feeding. And I do not wonder that people think that religion is grievous—and all the more because with this an ascetic element has been introduced—by good men, too.

Where men lived in times that were exceedingly lax; where they saw all the power of the land arrayed on the side of license and licentiousness; where they saw wealth devoted to the lowest uses; where they saw pleasure made only a snare and a delusion; where they saw all forms of conviviality still leading men down, down, I do not wonder that large numbers of them sprung up with such zeal for purity and integrity as carried them to the opposite extreme, and led them to reject flowers and music, and to become ascetics. Ascetics are the products of ages of utter and abandoned license.

But though the age and the necessity are gone, there are men who are still ascetic hereditarily. They have ceased to discriminate. They feel that if you are going to be religious, you must make up your mind to give up almost everything in this world.

When I preach that a true Christian has all the good that there is in the world, as well as the promise of after life, men say, "What do you make out of the example of Christ?" Well, I make out of Christ's example, this: that for about thirty years he lived at home, and worked at his trade, a simple peasant and carpenter, like any other mechanic. There was nothing special about him—nothing that attracted the least attention. He was not distinguished from any citizen. And when he began his ministration he was not ascetic. While John was thundering as an ascetic reformer in the lower parts of Palestine, Jesus was at Cana of Galilee, for seven days, at a marriage feast, and created not less than from fifty to a hundred gallons of wine, according to the Gospel, that he might assist in the festivities, with a decorous sobriety sympathizing with them. Jesus was a most loveable man; he was

a most genial man; he was a most conversable man. He went to the feasts of rich men, and sat at their tables. Some of his most striking discourses were those which he delivered at feasts in the houses of rich men. He sat with the poor man, with the lawyer, with the publican, with the soldier. Wherever a man met him, there was that genial sympathy manifested toward him. I can take no other instance more forcible than that of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, to show that religion should make a man cheerful, genial, conversable, enjoying and enjoyable. That was his example. And though at the end of his life, when he laid it down as a sacrifice for the world, he was a sufferer; yet that was but a single phase, a solitary aspect, of his history; and the ministerial life, as well as that life which anteceded it, of the Lord Jesus Christ, was full of society, full of enjoyment, full of pleasure.

Therefore, when men say, "What do you do with the life of Christ?" I take it up, and say, Live just as purely, and with such a noble, genial, cheerful life, as he did. He never girded himself with sackcloth. And when they reproached him because he would not fast, he said, "The days will come when my disciples will fast; but not now. I am with them"—as much as to say, "So long as I am with them they cannot help being happy." They could not be made to fast while he was with them.

Now, where a rigorous view of religion is presented; where men are told that no matter what one is doing, the instant the clock strikes twelve, the needle must be dropped, there comes that intolerable superstitious notion that there is such a thing as holy time. Why, do you suppose that we are living in the time of Moses? Are days consecrated? Is the ground consecrated? Is there consecration in a stone or in a brick? Is there consecration in one chronological period in contrast within another?

"What do you mean"? it is asked, "That we shall not observe the Sabbath"? I mean that you *shall* observe it; but that you shall observe it as free men, and not as men in bondage; not as under taskmasters, but with a rational perception that there is benefit in it; of your own sweet willingness, and not because you are afraid that God stands with a whip which he will bring down on your back, or with a pencil with which he will mark down your delinquencies against your name. And yet men will draw the belt up until there is no breath left in the body. And people living on this rigor of religious life say, "It is said not to be grievous; but I think it *is* grievous."

Then there is another reason why people think it is grievous. As a general thing, men who profess to be Christians, and who are in a measure leavened with Christianity, are so far from having developed

the true Christian type of character, that they present rather the appearance of men under great difficulties than the appearance of very lovely men having had conquests. If the fruit of the spirit is love, joy in the Holy Ghost, peace, faith, patience, temperance, and such qualities as these, why, then, all I have to say, is, that the fruit does not get ripe on most boughs. Men see what are called Christians, and they see what are called Christian experiences, and they reach up and take one, and bite it, and it is not to be desired again.

Are Christians of such a disposition that you mark them sure? I never make a mistake in judging of flowers. I never smell of a nettle or a thistle thinking it is a honeysuckle. My honeysuckle tells me by night and by day when it blossoms. I never go astray in autumn in regard to my grape vine. I know where the grapes are both by the smell, and by the touch, and by sight. I cannot make any mistake here.

But if we bring forth Christian fruit that hangs on our boughs—joy, peace, faith, gentleness, humility, holiness, long suffering, hope—so that the whole tree-top of our life is full of these in abundant clusters, and so that the fragrance of them is all about us, do you suppose that any one would need an argument in favor of Christianity, an apology for it, or a defence of its doctrine? I will venture to say that if such a life as this existed in the Church, if that church was an orchard, and every tree was hanging to the ground with such fruit on its boughs, it would make almost no difference in the world what the creed was. Men would swallow any creed for the sake of going into a church where the members brought forth such fruits as these. And one reason why men do not believe that there is much in religion, is, that there is not much in it as they see it exemplified.

Yet, I would say, on the other side, in the case of many of those men who are derided and set aside, and said to be insincere, that the work has just begun, and only just begun; that it is convalescence, but not health. Men have started, and taken a few steps; but they have not developed largely the truth of Christ in them. And so, when to rigorous machinery, and to a very severe presentation of doctrines, you add a comparatively unlovely Christian life,—as the life of men in hospitals,—or the life of men who have been grievously perverted, but who are striving to get back again to their normal condition, then all these elements, all these things which men see, fail to make a favorable impression upon those who look upon them.

On the other hand, wherever there is a true Christian, there you are sure to find men won toward religion. If there is in any neighborhood a person whose influence is always sought; who is always considerate of others; who is always full of sympathy; if there is any one in a

neighborhood, when a man is in trouble, whom all think of at once as that man or woman counsellor, faithful, full of kindness, who, day and night, would, if an opportunity were presented, serve disinterestedly their necessity, point out that person and ask, "Is religion a grievous thing?" Everybody—the rudest, the coarsest, the most belluine nature—bows down before that example, and feels that it is a beautiful thing.

There is something awful in true holiness. There is something impressive, even to the rudest natures, where they actually see the beauty and the power of the Christian disposition under wise control, until they learn to trust it, knowing that it is not a vain show, nor a pretence, nor a counterfeit; where they see that it is real, and that it preaches to them "the beauty of holiness." And in "the beauty of holiness" they believe that religion is not grievous. The commandments of God, if so exemplified, become most beautiful. They are holy, and just, and good as well.

But there is another reason why men feel that religion is grievous. It is because of their own experience. It is because they have attempted to live a religious life, and have never given their whole will and their whole heart to it. Men want to build themselves as carpenters build bureaus, using pine for the whole substance of it, and a little thin veneering for a finish, to make it look beautiful. Men want to build themselves up in all manner of gross, worldly forces, and have a thin veneering of righteousness or religion over that, just to cover down these other things, and make them beautiful, and make them sell well. And where men just surface themselves with religion, where men just polish off with religion, it is simply an irritant. It acts simply as a provocative. It keeps up before them a rule, or a conception, or an ideal, which they do not at all either accomplish or strive to accomplish. Half-way measures that are allowed to men are always disturbances to them. A man who is half-way between being sick and being well is never a very happy man, and is never a very profitable man to look at. A man who is half sea-sick does not enjoy voyages. A man who has had his leg broken and half cured, is not in a particularly comfortable condition. And just like these men are they who are attempting to be religious. They are just far enough advanced from their worldly courses to be all the time vexing and harrassing themselves with these moral obligations, which sometimes they meet and obey, and which sometimes they evade. All manner of irregularities, resistances and abnormal feelings spring up. And men are not happy under such circumstances. He is happy who gives himself up unreservedly to any course of religious life, and makes everything else consistent with that. Some become much happier than others, according to the system which they follow; but there is a cer-

tain sort of harmony which brings peace where a man surrenders himself wholly; where a man gives himself entirely to Christ. As soon as the battle is fought in a man, and all the great central impulses of his being are brought under the supreme control of the Divine Spirit, he finds satisfaction. But how few there are of such! How many men there are who are just a little religious—who have become a little healed, but who are for the most part afflicted with murmuring and complaining sickness.

As for those who have not begun a religious life, oftentimes they make essays, tentative endeavors; and they may be said to have approached it. Men have sometimes, as it were, *tried on* religion. They are most apt to do this when they have gone wrong. There is nothing which makes a man so quake as to have gone wrong, and to be afraid of detection. Oh! how he fears and sweats and wants to get back to something that shall reconcile him to himself, and make him happier! I have known men, under such circumstances, to go to church, oh! how fierce! and say prayers, oh! how regularly! and read the longest and toughest chapters, oh! with what pertinacity! and do a great many things,—until the scare had a little worn off, they gradually got over it, and, as it were, got out again, and fell once more into their old ways. And then, if you talk with them, they say, "I know about religion now. I have tried it. Why, I have been religious for a week together. I tell you it may be necessary, by-and-by; but it is a hard road to travel."

What would you think of a man, city-bred, lily-fingered, soft-jointed, and soft-muscled, who should say, "They tell me that there is great pleasure in living in the saddle, but I believe it is a lie; for I tried it one morning. I got a hard trotting horse, and rode several hours; and I was sore for days afterwards. I do not believe a word of what they say of horse-back riding."

And yet here are men who put themselves on the most unaccustomed exercises, and in their most external form and lowest ways; and they are so conceited as to suppose that they have had a taste, an experience, of religion. And when you talk to such men, what is their idea of religion? It is this: "I must leave off my old companions. I must go in among the old owls. When I get up Sunday morning, I cannot ride out; I cannot write letters; I cannot have a good time; I cannot meet my drinking companions and tell stories." They have lots of stories that must go on the shelf. There are ever so many things that they cannot do. And their idea of religion is, simply that it is a state in which they cannot do what they have been doing. There is no positiveness, no upward springing, no new life, no new power, in their impression concerning it. To their thought it is merely breaking off

from sin. And to such men religion must have a very gloomy aspect.

Ah! how different it is in reality! How hard it is for a man to drop off all his old relishes! While yet they are strong in him, and he has no other relishes, how he clings to them! A man who by famine has been driven to a mouldy loaf of bread, munches it in his hovel with avidity; and there comes a friend to him, and says, "Let me take you out of your misery. Throw away your loaf, and come with me." "Throw away my loaf?" says he. "I cannot spare this." But once set before him a wheaten loaf; once bring in the food smoking from the range, and set it before him, and how quick will he throw away his garbage!

Once bring the true relishes of holiness into a man's soul; once let the real life of Christ spring up in him; once let a man know what joy there is in disinterested kindness; once let a man follow Christ in suffering for another; let a man deny himself; let him and his wife and children—his whole household—deprive themselves of real comforts of life, in order to carry light and balm into a distressed household over the way; and let them talk it over together at night, and speak of the gratitude of those who have been relieved, and of the wondrous thanks of the little children—and how much nobler they feel! What a dignity they have! What a sense of manhood and womanhood they have! Instead of gobbling up their beneficence, and giving nothing to other people, they take their abundance, and share it with that household. And if need be, they take upon themselves more work, heavier tasks, that they may thus serve others. And they are amply repaid by the gratitude which is called forth by their benefactions, to say nothing of the consciousness which they have of acting from their higher impulses.

When a man gets a taste of self-denial, of disinterested kindness for others, the Gospel is preached to him. He receives tidings, good news, which he never could have had except by practical works of benevolence. Once let a man have a taste for true religion; once let a man feel the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and experience the aspiration of the soul for purity; once let a man have a sense of the divine love and real hungering and thirsting after righteousness—once let a man begin to taste these verities, and all other pleasures, in comparison with them, pale and lose their power.

No man is fit to judge of what religion is—as to whether it is beautiful and joyous, and free, and most to be desired—until he has had some actual experience of it. And then, when one has once tasted it, he will say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." This is the testimony of an over-crowning and all-conquering love. Though there be angels and

arch-angels in heaven; though all one's children have gone before him, and are there; though the dearest companion of his early affections, and the mother that bore him, are there; though sainted names in multitudes are there, the heart once taught to love, looking up, always says, "There is but one thing in the world, and that is what we love most and strongest. Whom have I in heaven but thee? Heaven would be empty if thou wert not there; and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

To those that are called of God, and that have a willing soul, the way to Christ is a very easy way. It is the way toward yourself, too. It is the way in which, when once you begin fairly to walk in it, you shall have the advantage of your reason, of your restored moral powers, and of all your affections, in their best estate. You shall have every advantage that can come from your harmonization with the great laws outside of you—the best laws of nature. You shall have all the help which comes from the Spirit of the living God, who watches, and in all the earth sees nothing that draws his heart quicker than a soul that desires to repent and return from the evil way. Oh! how God longs to have souls come to him!

A child, disobedient, has gone out, as it was forbidden to do; and has wandered from the house into the thicket; and from the thicket into the forest; and, bewildered and lost and scared, it rushes hither and thither, until night descends, and darkness wraps it in, and it lays itself down under some sheltering rock, or by the side of some huge log, sobbing itself to sleep; and, between dreams and wakings, both hideous, moans, and calls for father and mother, and more than all for *mother*, and thinks that there is no heart that is so saving as the heart of mother. But what does that child suffer compared with the distracted mother, who, missing it, calls out; who, receiving no answer, runs out after it, and searches right and left, in fearful places—down in the well and in the cistern; who looks every whither, thinking of Gipsies, and wild beasts, and a hundred other things; who alarms the neighborhood, and sends out men searching in the fields and woods, and filling the air all night with racket and outcry, none calling more than herself; and who, when the grey dawn comes, and the men, wearied, go home, will not go, but still holds on, until, by-and-by, in her almost distraction, her ear, sharpened beyond the ear of any other, hears some sound, and stands still as silence itself, and hears it again—the moan of a child—and, quicker than ever eagle sped for its prey, urged by love, speeds to it, and finds her lost darling. And tell me, as she takes that spent child up into her bosom, is there any other rapture like that of a mother? Oh yes. God says, "A mother may forget her sucking child; yet will not I forget thee."

God's love for those who are scattered and lost is intenser and deeper than the love even of a mother; and if there be in this congregation any one who is conscious of guilt, and who wants to come back to innocency; if there be one who is lost in the woods, and does not know how to find his way out, God longs to bring you home more than you long to get there. He has been calling, calling, calling, and listening for your answer. And when you are found, and you lay your head on the bosom of Jesus, and you are at rest, you will not be so glad as He will be who declared that, like a shepherd, he had *joy over one sinner that repented more than over ninety and nine just persons that needed no repentance.*

And so, I call you to yourselves. I call you back to your own nature. I call you to your better selves. I call to that God from whom you sprang, and to whom you go again. I call you to the life of duty, the life of liberty, the life of purity, the life of joy, and the life of immortality.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that thou hast made it possible for us to commune with thee; that thou dost reach down thy thoughts unto ours, which could not rise unto thee. Thou art so much above us, thou art so lifted up into an air where we cannot dwell except when thou dost give us thine own life, and quicken ours, that we never should find our way home, and never should know our Father, and never should have that great love by which we shall overcome life and death, and conquer immortality, but for the graciousness of thy condescension. We thank thee that thou hast permitted us so many times to come, and made the way now a way of flowers. We have gone through the wilderness to thee; but coming back it was a paradise. We have gone bearing burdens, and knew not what became of them. Thy very look had turned them all to lightness. We have gone with disappointments, only to have them interpreted into mercies. We have gone with sorrow and confusion; but behold, while yet we were confessing, the greatness of thy forgiving love broke out upon us, as the sun breaks through the storm-clouds, and all the terror was gone. We have come to thee often and often, weary and heavy-laden, and we have taken thy yoke, and it was no yoke; and thy burden, and it was not burdensome. O Lord our God, we thank thee for the past experience, and that out of it we derive all argument of hope. Not because of what thy word hath said, but because of what thou hast said in us, and a hundred times fulfilled, we believe in thee. And we rejoice that we may thus increase our faith from day to day. And as we go onward; as we draw near to thee; as we become riper for the heavenly land; as we have the intimations of truth; as we work out the spirit of love more and more perfectly, we hope yet to be in that state by which it will be possible for us to discern the invisible, and to live as seeing Him who is invisible.

We pray that thou wilt, to-night, forgive us our sins. Wash out, we beseech of thee, every stain and spot, that we may be white as snow. Not only

grant to us the forgiveness of our sins, but heal us in those fountains which sin brings. Purify our motives, and search our hiddenmost life. By thy Spirit, as with a glowing light, illumine, and, as with a living fire cleanse us, that all dross may be taken away. And we pray that thou wilt prepare us for all the duties of life. Prepare us for its disappointments; for its sorrows; for whatever is in reserve for us. And may we not shrink who are the followers of the Sufferer. Grant that we may be willing to bear our cross, as thou didst bear thine. We that are sin-laden—should we not suffer, when thou the sinless One made an offering for our sins? May we not count ourselves better than the Master; and may we rejoice from day-to-day that we are permitted to suffer for Christ's sake, and be only anxious that suffering shall do its perfect work, and make us patient and gentle, and make us more and more reverential, and truthful, and hopeful, that the work of God may be perfectly done in us. And as we do not doubt our friends who are kind to us, so may we never doubt thee, the best of all friends. Grant that our trust in thee may be more confiding, and that it may have more comfort in it. And in dark hours, and days of discouragement, whatever else fails us, oh! let not the sweet face of Jesus, looking upon us, full of forgiveness, and love, and mercy, fail us. And may thy countenance, by night and by day, at home and abroad, and everywhere, be our Comfort and our Guiding Star.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon us now assembled, pastor and people, for the last time for the space of weeks—it may be for the last time. Grant, we pray thee, that we may separate, commending each other to God. Grant that in a holy hope, and in the firm faith of thy truth, we may go on our several ways. In trouble, when anxious with forebodings, grant that we may leave everything in thine hands. Thou wilt do better for us than we can do for ourselves. Living or dying may we be the Lord's. And whether or not we see each other again in the flesh, grant that we may have the hope burning brighter as the days grow darker, that we shall meet in heaven. We pray that none of us may be wrecked by the way; that all of us may be saved, and that we may all meet together a rejoicing household to be forever in the presence of our Father.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of truth spoken, and grant that it may do good to every one. May it remove impressions and mistakes that are hindering any. May it quicken some that need quickening. May it encourage some who are on the way toward thee. Stretch out thine hands again to those who have refused thy message to come. Call again to those who have refused to hear. O Lord Jesus! bring back the wandering, and forgive them all their sins, and all their mistakes. Overlook them, and sanctify them, and save them with an everlasting salvation.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

FIERY DARTS.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."—Eph., VI., 16.

Instead of "above all," it would be better if it were rendered *over all;* for the figure is one drawn from the great Roman shield—not from a buckler, but from the great shield by which the whole person was protected. This is a part of a beautiful military figure. It is drawn with singular skill through almost all parts of the armor known and used in the old Roman warfare. The apostle's eye was caught, evidently, with the military organization of the Romans. The Jews were essentially a brave and military people. We have, therefore, in the writings of the apostle, frequent references to military affairs.

He also employs illustrations drawn from architecture; but always in reference to its uses, and never in reference to its beauty. Although Grecian literature and the Grecian language at this time predominated throughout the East, and although this was the spoken language, probably—at any rate by the commerce of Palestine, and mostly by the educated classes in the cities of Palestine; and although Palestine itself was filled—particularly in the North, and over the Jordan on the other side—with villages and with cities which were built by Greek architects; and although the Grecians had then the same relation to commerce which now the Jews themselves have, in all the world, and the Greek was the merchant of the world; yet, Paul never seems to have caught one single ray of the light of art. Nor do I recollect a solitary instance in which picture, or statue, or temple, was used by him on account of its beauty. Nor do I recollect one single passage in the New Testament which distinctively recognizes what we should call the æsthetic, or the science of beauty, which constituted not only a large part, but which, in connection with philosophy, was the characteristic element of the civilization of the Grecian world—which world had overspread Palestine. And it seems very strange that the Jews should have caught so little of the spirit of the Greeks. It is a testimony to what you might call *thorough-breeding.* For, in order to maintain spirituality, the Jew was forbidden utterly to make

Sunday Morning, July 31, 1870. Lesson: Eph. VI. Hymns (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 23, 888, "Shining Shore."

any image of God out of anything above, or out of anything below, or out of anything upon the earth, or to liken God to anything, and was to maintain inviolate an ideal and spiritual conception of Jehovah. This primary, and always observed command, wrought in the nation an indisposition to represent anything.. They never became artists, and never studied human life, nor the human form, with reference to art. So that side of the nature of man was never developed among them. And for thousands of years, even after they came under the influence of such elements, in their most imposing forms, they still resisted and threw off the æsthetic element.

But the moment the Jew was brought into the neighborhood of commerce, he showed aptitudes. The moment architecture, in its industrial and economic relations, was brought before the apostle's mind, he saw the elements of it. The moment the courts, or the administration of Roman government in the shape of a military force, the moment camps and armed soldiers were brought before him, he saw illustrations and analogies enough that might be drawn from them. And this is the most masterly of them:

"Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day [that is, in the great battle-day], and having done all [or rather having *overcome* all] to stand"—as Grant did in the Wilderness, and as other generals did not, who always hauled off to repair after a battle, and so never gained anything. The apostle says, "Fight your battle through, and hold your ground after you have fought it. Make use of your victory." There are a great many who fight a battle, and then run, and lose the advantage. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Not to pursue the figure further, as this is the theme which I shall discuss, I will speak upon it.

What are these "fiery darts"? Was it the glitter of the arrow that he had in his imagination, as it flies through the air? In the first place, it is very doubtful if one sees the glitter of arrows under such circumstances, unless we believe in enormous deliveries. The ancients had what might be called *the bombs of the bow.* As we, with artillery, throw explosive shot that not only destroy by their fragments, but set on fire and burn; so the prototypes of these were arrows, the ends of which were bound up with inflammable material; this was ignited, and the arrows were delivered into the face of the enemy, or into his ships; or, if it was a siege, into the midst of his city. These flaming darts, these missiles that carried fire in every direction,

are "the fiery darts" of which the apostle speaks. And they are likened to temptations. That is, there are temptations which are like these fire-carrying arrows. Inflammatory temptations there are, which, as it were, set men on fire.

There are a great many temptations that men experience which are slow. They are comparatively imperceptible. Their access is not discerned. Their process of working is not at the time understood. We rather see them in their effects than in their actual presence.

There are many temptations which are derived from selfishness; that are insidious; that are so closely allied to duty that we do not distinguish the one from the other.

There are many temptations which spring from pride; which are cold; which incline us to wrong by negative elements, rather than by positive. There are many temptations which come from conservative elements in the soul. All that great round and realm of wrong which consists in not doing, is silent, unconscious, slow, and oftentimes even frigid.

Besides these, there are temptations which rush, and which make themselves apparent in the beginning, and all the way through. And a very large class there is of them. The genus is large; the species are many. They may, in some sense, be said always to agitate, and often to inflame, and actually set on fire the soul. And it is temptations of this kind that the apostle represents as being thrown by the great adversary, the general of evil, the devil, who lays siege to man as to a city; or makes war upon him as one warrior makes war upon another; and assaults him in one way and another, but, especially by the use of these fiery arrows; or, in other words, by assaults which raise up those great, powerful basilar passions which are so indispensable to the mechanism of life, but which are by irregularity and misuse rendered so full of mischief, and the causes of such immense and desolating sins.

Of these temptations I shall speak more in the sequel. I only mention them now for the sake of clearing and setting before you precisely the subject of the text, and dwelling upon them thus far.

Now, against all these temptations which come to our lower nature, and which are in their character inflammatory; or which, if we may change the figure, act like a ferment; or which, changing the figure again, are like a smouldering fire, which sometimes breaks out in blisters, and sometimes burns silently, like a fire in a partition, without air, and will not come out—against all these temptations the apostle does not say, "Oppose the sword or the spear"—they can not be fought with good chances of success. You are not to use the sandals to get out of the way with,—they are not to be run away from. You are to oppose to these "darts" the great "shield of faith."

Well, that, to most of you, is saying that you are to oppose nothing to temptations; because *faith* really means about nothing to you. It is a word that means so much; it is a word that has so many definitions that it is difficult to tell just what it does mean. One thinks it means this; another thinks it means that. And confusion has been so badly confounded in the matter, that for the most part I think people do not know what it means. Therefore, to tell them, "Against such temptations as these you must oppose faith," is to tell them, "You must get rid of these temptations in the best way you can."

Is there any clear understanding of what faith is? Without going into theological niceties at all, I propose, first, to take the simple Scripture statement of what *faith* is, and then give an analysis or expression of it in our modern tongue, and according to our modern habits of philosophy. It seems to me that the matter may be so disabused that every man may see exactly what is meant by *faith*, in general; and what will be specific acts of faith.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the writer, whoever he was, (it is in doubt who wrote it), declares, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Language could not be more precise. As I think you will see when we carry the matter out to the full, language could not be found which would more exactly and more clearly comprehend the whole subject than that. "Faith is" —what? The substance of things? Exactly not. If it were anything that existed, and had a form, and was measurable, ponderable, estimable, then it could not be faith. It would be sensuousness. "Faith is the substance of things *hoped for*." It is something that is imagined. It is not something that exists; or rather, it is something that exists in imagination. It is that which men hope for. It lies beyond, out of reach and out of sight.

That that is the meaning which is intended, the next clause indicates, viz., "the evidence of things not seen." It is that which man realizes without the use of his eyes or senses.

Well, is there anything that men know without using their senses? We know what the sphere of the senses is. By touch, by sight, by taste, by smell, by hearing, we recognize the existence of a world not to be undervalued. The great substratum on which another life is built, is this material, physical world; and all that belongs to it we recognize by our senses, one or other of them separately, or several of them conjointly.

But the apostle says, 'There is something more. There is another range. There is truth beyond that which the ear hears, or the eye sees, or the hand handles, or the nose smells, or the tongue tastes.' There is a world which science, as the minister of knowledge to the

lower senses, does not reach. Can science teach *honor*, describe it, weigh it, divide it, in any way that you know of? And yet, is there not such a thing as honor? And can science, or any of the senses, in any way teach a single one of those conceptions to which we come by education and by refinement? Does not the development of the human mind by education lift a man at once into a higher sphere? It does not lift him above his senses; but through his senses, primarily, does it not develop a higher range of faculties which discern truths innumerable and transcendently important—so important as to constitute the difference between civilization and savageism; or as to constitute the difference between genius and mere drudge-labor? Does there not spring out of the higher development of the mind the capacity to recognize things which never present themselves to the eye, nor to any of the senses? And are not these things unseen? Are they not things, when men contemplate them, to be "hoped for"—that is to say, to be *looked for*—in a future and higher sphere?—not to be looked for, however, as we look for crystals, or ores, or fruit; as we look for substances that are produced, or that grow out of the ground.

Well, if this be a fact, as I have no doubt it is, there comes, then, next, the question, "What is the adaptation of the mind for this?" If you take mental philosophy, as founded at all on physiology (for without physiology mental philosophy is fog, is a *mirage;* and a man might just as well attempt to plow the soil, or sail the ship, that he sees by *mirage* in the sky, as to attempt to use a mental philosophy which does not base itself upon physiology)—if you look at the human mind in this direction, you perceive that there are two classes of faculties given to man. First, there are those which are called *the basilar faculties.* You may look, perhaps, in vain, in the books, for these faculties; but you will not have to look far if you look into yourself, to find them. They are those faculties of the mind which act through the body, and upon those physical conditions on which the body itself depends; through the propagating instincts; through the defensory instincts; through the force-giving instincts; through that enginery of the mind by which man is enabled to deal with the physical globe, and with those creatures that populate it, and which adapts him to the circumstances in which he was born.

Besides this perceptive lower nature, there is the receptive reason. This begins to work with the higher nature. Then there are the higher realms where are found the noble sentiments of truth; of justice; of love; of mercy. There are intuitions in these things. There are higher elements of mind by which men grow above the sordid and the sensuous, the low and the secular; by which men more and more live.

Society at large naturally divides itself in this way; and we speak

of those persons as refined who are not only educated to the senses, but are educated to the higher forms or methods of thinking or acting.

What the apostle all the way through means, generally, by *faith*, is, that it is that action of the mind which essentially consists in the employment of these super-sensuous faculties, or that part of the mind which works, not with matter, and on matter, but on qualities; on invisible truths; on things that are, but that give no forms which the mind recognizes through the body—sentiments and great spiritual truths which man is endowed with the capacity to appreciate and to believe in, and which never reduce themselves to the measurement of the senses.

He is in the flesh who lives by the use of the mere fleshly instincts or organs; and he is in the spirit, as Paul reasons in Romans, who lives by the spirit—still keeping this same generic division; namely, that he who lives by the use of the higher faculties of his nature is living in a state of spirituality, in a state of faith; and he that lives by his sight, by his senses, is living in the flesh. He is carnal; he is secular. This great division of men, they that live by the body and they that live by the mind, is recognized by society and by philosophy. And when you come to look at it, you see it in the Bible as well as anywhere else. There are two sorts of people living. There is one class that are living by the use of the bodily senses in material things. They are in the flesh; and they cannot please God. And there is another class who are living by the use of the reason and the moral sentiments. They discern qualities, and values in qualities.

Ask an old miserable miser, "What are honesty and honor worth?" and he will say to you, "Nothing, unless they give a man a little more credit on the exchange." He does not recognize anything except a material quality. If it can be made to turn into silver and gold, honor is something; and if not, it is nothing. And his idea of character is simply a little drop of water that will turn the mill-wheel of his purposes better—that is all. But go to a plenary *man*—a man full of living, gushing instincts of mercy and goodness; full of manliness—and ask him, "What is honor? Is it merely a name to cover expediency?" and how like a hemisphere honor glows before his mind, full of radiancy and of stars! Describe it he cannot. Measure it he cannot. It is illimitable. If I say to him, "Bring it down so that I can understand it," he turns to me and says, "If you do not know what it is by feeling it, I cannot tell you what it is." It is something beyond the ear, the eye, the hand, the tongue, or the organ of smelling. And yet, it is real. Ten thousand men would die to-morrow, quicker than to give up that which has no physical expression, and no marketable value, but which is to them a vital, absolute and glowing reality.

Nothing is real to them, if that is not. And yet, the senses cannot recognize it at all.

This honor often moves in a low sphere, being merely the low fragment of a higher thing. It is, as it were, the mere skirt of the garment which the true angel of honor, flying through the air, lets down to men. There is a military honor; there is a social honor; there is honor in business; there are various kinds of honor; honor puts different measurements and permissions on itself; but it is in every case the measurement of something that has no sensuous existence, which has no existence except as it dwells in men's thoughts absolutely; and which they believe in and recognize as being greater than things that are; than things that can be seen and measured. And these are what the apostle means when he speaks of *things which are not, bringing to naught things that are.* This power of sentiment, of truth, of beauty, of love, and of honor, brings to naught the maxims, the policies,—ten thousand things of this mortal life.

He, then, who lives in this higher realm, who dwells in the upper part of his nature, who is allied to God in the Spiritual world, is in a generic state of faith. That is, *faith* is living so that you have before your mind "The substance of things hoped for." Faith is the "Evidence of things not seen." It is the recognition of those truths which live in the great invisible.

This is the generic definition of faith. It will have specifics. That is to say, for instance, there will be a faith of fear: in other words, a man will oftentimes refuse invisible truths under the inspiration of fear. A recognition of things unseen is faith; but a specific of this faith is fear. Then there is a "faith that works by love," we are told. That is to say, faith is a sense of the invisible; but a specific of it is such a sense working through the love element. So there is a "faith that sanctifies the soul"; but it is a specific under this great generic. The ruling idea of faith is the recognition and experience of the power of those great truths which are not sensuous, nor secular, nor carnal, but which exist only in the contemplation of a man's higher reason and higher moral endowments; the special practical applications of this recognition will be found in its working with specific sentiments of the soul.

Now, the Apostle Paul says, "When these fiery darts of temptation, these arrows with burning tips, come flying toward you, put before you the armor which shall cover your whole self—the shield of faith." It is as if he had said, "The grand resource of men against their passions, is, to live in the higher moral sentiments: to abide in them; to dwell there; to experience these elements, and have the habit of using them."

I have taken a great many words to explain this, because it lies a little out of the track of what is the supposed teaching of the apostle; but I trust it is plain to you, what is his substantial teaching in this direction. The dwelling habitually in this higher region; the living by faith; the abiding,—not in any metaphysical, or theological, or mystical, or specially administered state, which some men have by the grace of God, and other men have not,—but in the higher range of every man's soul, and in commerce with God and holy things—that, in the first place, redeems a man from temptation.

It is very easy to shoot arrows down; and they accelerate in speed at every single foot, because to the strength of the bow is added the attraction of gravitation. And upon the heads of those who live low the bolts, the arrows of temptation which the devil throws down, fall with double force. But the men who live high have this advantage, that when the devil shoots up at them, against the force of the bow which drives the missile upward is the power of the big globe, which claims tribute of everything that flies in the air, and pulls it back again. And so, every foot the arrows go up, they go slower and slower. And if stronger bows are brought into requisition, and the arrows are thrown a little further and a little further, you must go higher and higher, until with the best bows they cannot reach you. One reason why some men are tempted more than others, is that the altitude at which they live is not so high.

An old gentleman who used to live in Indianapolis, built his house in a dry ravine, and when the river bank gave way, in an extraordinary freshet, he had the full benefit of the flood. The water swept round and round his house. But his neighbors, who were almost within hand's reach of him, were high and dry. They were safe, because they built on higher ground than he did.

If you travel in Europe, you will be struck with two things—that in olden times they used to build their towers and castles on the tops of the most inaccessible rocks, so that there were perpendicular precipices, sometimes hundreds of feet, below, and only a narrow way to go up there; and that there was not a window or door nearer than twenty-five or thirty feet to the ground, so that they had to be hoisted up to the second story before they could enter. Not only was it difficult for the enemy to get up there, but when they got up there, the lower story being massive and unopen, they found it hard to get in. But if they had built their houses on the level ground, and had doors and windows near the ground, how much easier it would have been for an armed force to take possession of them!

Men who live low down in their nature are within the reach of temptations that spring from the fiery passions; but men who live far

up in their nature; men who think just things; men who never permit their imagination to go out foraging, are beyond the reach of such temptations.

Sometimes men go over a battle-field when the battle is raging, "to see;" and get their pay for it; and men sometimes go out when the battles of life are being waged, and come back shot. Frequently men go over the land prospecting—and that is not so bad; but in moral things the less men know about wickedness the better for them. The imagination is accustomed to sail over forbidden things. It is accustomed to play vulture. The vulture, hovering high, but with eyes prone, looks over the landscape at—what? The lambs that frisk and frolic in the meadows? Oh no. At the gay flowers in the fields? Oh no. At the vineyards with luscious fruit upon the purfled boughs of autumn? Oh no—he looks at carrion. Not the live sheep, but the dead one; not fragrant flowers, but stinking carrion—that is what the vulture sees, and seeing, plunges down to feed upon. Of all the things which the sun makes, not one attracts his eye. He only cares for the things which death preys upon.

There be men who sail, in imagination, over the spheres of life, and see nothing but that which comes from the basilar faculties; from the lower life; from the baser nature. Wherever there is brutal force; wherever there is cunning, and its various games; wherever there is the ever-bubbling toil; wherever there is the conflict of the passions; wherever there is the strife of death, there their eye fastens itself on things that are feculent, foul, death-struck, and death-breeding.

There are men who do not mean to be dishonest, who do not mean to steal, but who say, "How easy I could put this so, and put that so, and make a very handsome pile! And nobody would find it out. But of course I would not do it. I want to be honest."

Now, no man can afford even to *think* dishonesty. No man can afford to think murder or cruelty. No man, according to the testimony of Jesus, can look upon a woman to lust after her without committing adultery in his heart. And so it is with the permissions of the passions. It is not safe for a man to dwell down in the great basilar realm. It is not even safe to look into it any more than you have to. If you would be free from temptation, you must live above it; you must not have commerce with it. You must from day to day fly higher, and abide higher. The great invisible realm; the realm which is ministered to you through your higher reason, and your moral instincts, by the Holy Ghost—that is the realm where your thoughts must live, abide, dwell, from day-to-day. And men who do live there are comparatively free from these temptations, these arrows, these "fiery darts." It is here that "the shield of faith" protects them. If

a man is divinely constituted, if he is strongly fortified, if he has the armor of faith, and carries it with him from day-to-day, into his business, and everywhere he goes, then when he comes into the conflicts of temptation he is safe. If a man is a man of war, and he has to go into danger, let him put on his armor, and be prepared for whatever may befall him, by habitually dwelling in this higher realm, and learning how to control all its resources of power.

I proceed, now, to a few points of application.

The inflammation of the human passions, in the first place, deserves special consideration. Observation shows that our lower feelings are generally subject to a kind of fermentation or inflammation. I mean this a little differently from the line of thought in which I have already indulged. Those who have had the bringing up of the young are sometimes astonished at the tenacity with which they seem to go wrong. The young themselves are sometimes astonished at it. I remember, in my own case, how soon, ideas once getting entrance into my mind. I seemed to be utterly powerless to throw them off, until after they had had a certain course. They ran like a fever.

Take curiosity, as it is allied with the lower passions of human nature. I may say, generically, that in all robust natures, largely organized, supplied with a great reservoir of power, there is, in early life, a principle of curiosity which attaches itself to that part of their nature which is most quick and earnest—the lowest part usually. And this curiosity has an inflammatory action. And when it is once set in operation, it is not put out by a word, nor by a resolution. It works by night and by day. It forsakes a man when he drops to sleep, but it meets him the first thing when he wakes again.

This will explain the excessive curiosity that the young have for things which, if we be pure-minded and pure-mouthed, seem to us disgusting, revolting.

There is a curiosity in the young to know what intoxication means. It is a morbid, unhealthy, intense feeling. I recollect very well that I had an impression that if I should once take a mouthful of wine, I should see visions and dream dreams. I supposed that I should be lifted above all ordinary conceptions of flavors and of exquisite excitements. I had read some little of the poets; I had read some of the drinking songs—for the lyrics of the world have been largely used by the devil for the celebration of spirits, and of the faculties which most naturally work with them. And so I knew something about these things; and I longed to drink wine. I remember the first time I ever tasted it. It was at my father's table, on Thanksgiving day. Father poured out a little Madeira glass (some of you will know what that is) full of wine, and that was passed among eight children of us; and there

was considerable left when it got round! When it came to me, it seemed as though I had drank a very small quantity of liquid fire. My young mouth had not been tanned; and of all burning, disagreeable flavors, this was the worst that I could form any conception of. I think I never tasted anything so horrid as that seemed then. I would have flown to a cup of rhubarb rather than to have tasted it again. And yet, that curiosity was not sated. I was sure that it was not *wine* that I had tasted. And George Woodruff and I determined that we would have a drink of real wine. He was to get it, and I was to meet him at a certain field, at a given time. I was bound to know what wine was—and I did. I had a taste of it then; and I was going to say that it was the last taste I ever did have of wine. For forty years afterwards I do not suppose I took what would amount to a wine-glass full, aside from communion wine—and that never put me in love with wine. I remember how, on that fated day, I lay in the field, waiting for George. I recollect, now, watching the shadow of a daisy as it danced over the ground. I remember how sweet the vernal grass smelled. And I remember the sensations which I had when I thought how, when George came, we should both take out our cups and drink. And I remember how I felt when we did drink—taking only one bitter swallow, which I spit out instantly. That was enough for me. I could not be persuaded to drink any more. But up to that time the desire, the longing, which I experienced, to try it, was intense. And I feel great compassion for persons who are tormented with a morbid curiosity to try things which are not worthy of them. Remembering how it worked with me, I can understand how it works with others—particularly with persons of an imaginative nature. And all things work with persons of an imaginative nature on a higher scale than with others.

We perceive the excessive desire of the young to use tobacco. They have a morbid curiosity about it. It touches their vanity. As old people desire above everything else to seem young, so young people desire above everything else to seem old. And as the "oldest" thing which the young see, or notice, usually, is smoking or chewing, so they long to smoke or chew. And yet, it would seem as though the angel that sat in the gate with a sword had been transferred from paradise to the field of tobacco, and sat waving his weapon, and forbidding men to touch it. If anything can be created so that no man could learn to love it, it seems to me that tobacco has been so created. And yet, boys that could hardly be persuaded to get well of a fever by taking paregoric, or an emetic, or any loathsome medicine, will pull at the hideous "long-nine," and run through the streets, and air themselves,

and try it again, and keep trying for days, and weeks, and months, in order to get rid of nausea, and learn to smoke.

It is not merely vanity, but a prurient curiosity. There is this fermentation; there is this inflammation; there are these "fiery darts;" there is an actual process going on in the lower nature, in the passions and appetites, of men, which creates a longing for pleasures; for founts of pleasure; for going out "to see." They wonder what they shall see. They are restless and impatient "to know life," as it said.

Although, fortunately, my feet were removed from the paths of temptation betimes, and I never fell into the snare, I recollect the beginnings and goings on in me of longings to see what life was. And here let me say that many of these longings might, by humanity on the part of parents, be removed, or modified, or overruled. I recollect very well (I was a carefully brought up boy, as you would know!) that I was not allowed, at certain periods of my life, to go out of my father's dooryard. I *did* though! I recollect that I was never allowed to go down town on public days, when I was small. It was all meant for my good; but it was hard for me to bear. I did not much care as long as it was a mere election crowd, or something of that sort; but when it was general-training day (I speak to those who were brought up in Connecticut) and I stood in the corner of the yard, and I heard the far boom of that "kettle drum," as we called it, and saw the red uniforms in the distance (they dressed in red then) I was set all wild with excitement, and I wept because I could not go down and see what was going on. There was Ed Carrington, and there was Si Carrington, and there were the other boys, no better than I (poor miserable minister's son that I was), going down the street, probably with six cents apiece in their pockets; and there I was, shut up in father's dooryard! And I stood looking, and listening, and longing, and crying; and I cannot tell you how much I suffered.

I was a little roguish boy, as you would be apt to say; but that was not all. I had an imagination that filled the heavens with spectres. I saw the whole green full of volunteers. More than that, I saw things in exaggerated forms, and in undue proportions. My imagination gave rise to grotesque visions. I fancied a thousand things which had no reality. And if my father had taken me down town, and let me see things as they were, it would have satisfied my curiosity, and given me a correct view of things—on the same principle that if, when a timid horse is afraid of any object, you bring him up to it, and let him look at it, and smell of it, he will no longer be afraid of it. This would have been a great deal better for me. Although I admit that there are a great many things against even the sight of which the young should be guarded; yet, there are many other things which it is better

for the parent, in bringing up the child, to let him see. And the parent, by acting upon that hint, while exercising a judicious censorship over the child, can cure this morbid, desperate, most intolerable curiosity, which sets on fire the imaginations of children, and makes them long for things which, if they are restrained from, they will be apt to find out in surreptitious modes, thus adding deceit to their curiosity, and rendering them liable to perversion in other ways.

Remember, in dealing with your children, that a simple unallowable desire, which ought not to be indulged, ought not, on the other hand, to be snubbed, or rudely treated. It is a fiery temptation, it is a smouldering fire, it is a raked-up fire, it is a morbid disease for the time being; and it ought to be treated accordingly. Not that every case can be treated in the way which I have mentioned; but the knowledge that there are cases which can be so treated will give every discerning parent some practical conception in respect to the treatment of children.

Trusting children is as good as trusting men. Children cannot govern themselves unless you give them a chance; and if you are forever governing them they will never have a chance. What sort of letting my child drive would that be where he rode with me, and I held the reins myself? Children, for the most part, go with their parents, and are directed by their parents; but if you would make the child self-reliant, you must let him form his own judgment. He will make mistakes; but that is to be expected. If a child is going to be self-governing he must be allowed to govern himself.

There is also an inflammation which comes on in the form of envyings and jealousies in life. These are fevers. They seldom come suddenly. They seldom come without a certain incipiency which men can discern when once they have set in. Are there not witnesses here who can bear testimony, "I cannot resist this kind of temptation, or that kind of temptation?" Are there not persons here who say, "I cannot help being jealous?" Some people there are, who fall back on their nature, and excuse their jealousy by saying, "I am made so." There are others who are envious, and who excuse themselves on the same plea. He is a very bold man who can say that he has not a particle of envy in him. He is a rare man who, being looked at all round, is found not to be susceptible to envy, or a sense of pain on account of some other person's superior fortune, position or circumstances. It is a devilish experience, and none the less so because it is common.

These feelings are to be treated as we treat inflammations. They are not shocks. They do not come and go with a blow and an explosion. They are not like powder whose whole mischief is done in an instant, or not at all. They are fires which burn. And the general

remedy for them is, being lifted above their realm. If a man who is attacked by them still continues to live down in the material region where they are, he will continue to suffer from them. Not until he goes to a greater height where they are feebler, and takes "the shield of faith," can he get rid of them. The only remedy for them is to live in the higher nature, and in commerce with God and heaven, setting his affections on things above, and taking a nobler conception of the value of that from which envy springs.

The point that I wish you to notice, is, that these are lingering inflammations in the minds of men, and that they are not to be cured by resolutions, but by what is called *constitutional treatment;* by going into a higher range of faculties, and *living* in them.

The inflammation of love is one of the most noble, one of the most universal, and, strangely, one of the most ridiculous, of these inflammations. It seems to me very singular that the world should select the very highest and divinest of all men's faculties as the one on which to explode its jests and its merriment. It is not the less singular because I myself feel an irresistible temptation to do it. I hardly think anybody ever saw young love born, that he did not at once experience a sense of the ludicrous. Love is the most beautiful thing in the world. There is not a flower that blooms in the garden of the soul that is so beautiful as the budding of love. There is no commerce this side of the gate of heaven that is comparable to it. There is no joy like that which the tree of love bears upon its bough, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. I not only would not discourage true love, romantic love, strong love, all-engrossing love, but I think that without it there is no true manhood, and no true womanhood. Yet, it is that which makes you smile, and makes me smile, and makes everyone smile, when we see it spring out fresh. The only time when you do not smile at it, is when you feel it yourself. It is a reality to the actors. To everybody else, the world over, there is an element of beauty, and also an element of the ludicrous, in it. And in dealing with those who are under our care—guardians with their wards, teachers with their pupils, parents with their children, and pastors with their people—this is to be taken into consideration, that the outbreaking of affection is an inflammation which is in part made up of the higher and more perfect elements of the mind. And love is good in proportion as it includes in itself the action of every single faculty of your mind. It must be comprehensive and voluminous in order to be divine. Where it has mingled with it the lower elements of the soul, it is almost invariably of a lingering and inflammatory character. You cannot stop it by saying, "You shall stop." You cannot stop it by commands of any sort. Neither can you stop it by good advice. You

can only stop it by some alterative; and the upper part of a man's mind is the natural alterative of the lower part. If you can in any way develop the reason, and the moral sense, and the taste, and higher relishes that shall be stronger than this lower development of passion, you can overrule it or change it; but never by saying that it is your duty to change it. Effects do not take place without causes. You might as well think of drawing out the inflammation from a diseased part without resorting to any procuring causes—to blisters, to rubefacients, to some kind of active treatment; you might as well command the inflammation to leave the rheumatic limb, expecting it to obey, as to think of removing this inflammation of the mind without building up the child, or the grown person, on the side of the nobler feelings.

I believe that there is a kind of incipient insanity in temptation to cruelty. Men tell us that after they had once made up their mind to rob a house they tried to resist it, they tried to throw it off, they tried to get rid of it by turning to work or amusement; but that it followed them in spite of all their endeavors. Men say that from the moment they had made up their mind to murder a man for his money, the devil seemed to urge them on, and never left them for an instant, but rode them day and night, and that they saw blood all the time. I do not doubt that they described experiences truly. These strong biases of the lower appetites and passions are strong and positive inflammations. I believe that the causes of them, and the elements which they involve, are physical, as well as social and moral, and that when they attack the mind they take hold of it strongly, and are slow to let go.

Let it be understood, then, by all parents, or teachers, or rectors, or guardians, or guides of men, that there is a principle of slow combustion—or, if I might change the figure, a principle of fermentation—going on in the minds of those under their care, and that if you can keep them from dwelling in their thoughts upon things that are abnormal and unhealthful, by keeping them interested in things that are normal and healthful, you will see them gradually come into a state of mind in which they will not be harassed and injured by wrong desires. The way to prevent those evils which proceed from the inordinate action of the lower nature, is to have such a disciplined use of the higher reason, the better affections, and the nobler sentiments, that they can be kept in the ascendancy. There is no temptation where the upper part of the mind has supreme control.

I am never tempted to steal. I think you might leave your watch or your pocket-book in my house and not miss it a great while. I think it would be safe in my hands. And after I had restored it to

you, I should not flatter myself that I had given proof of eminent honesty, and should not make an entry in my journal—(if I kept one, which I don't: I consider a journal the fool's mirror)—I should not write there that Deacon A. called upon me, and, in absent-mindedness took out his wallet to give me some money for charitable purposes, or in absent-mindedness left it (you can take it either way), and that after pondering for some time the question as to what it was my duty to do, I finally said to myself, "You are a Christian, and must not steal," and took the wallet, and ran as hard as I could, and gave it to him. I should not describe my action that way. And yet, that might describe the action of a man who was living in the lower faculties, and was tempted to steal. You and I have been so effectually trained the other way that we never think of stealing, and never could be induced to do it, and never give ourselves any credit for not doing it. I know my thoughts dwell in such a realm, that it is not possible for them to be reached by these lower influences. How it might be if I were an officer of the Sub-Treasury or a director of a railroad, I do not know. I cannot tell what I might come to by drill. But as it is, there is not the remotest possibility of it.

Now, in regard to all these lower developments, in regard to all these evil tendencies which you meet with in the family, in the school, in the shop, of which life is full, and by which parents are troubled and school-masters and school-mistresses are vexed, and people generally are annoyed—in regard to them all, remember that while there may be specific treatment (which I cannot pause to dilate upon), the general treatment is this: Take "the shield of faith." Learn so to live in the higher realm of reason, and moral sentiment, and honor, and duty, and purity, and love, and justice, and fidelity, and courage, and cheer, and wholesomeness of soul, that when these temptations are sent by the devil's bow, they will fall quenched from "the shield of faith." And teach this life to those in your care.

This Faith is the all-extinguishing element by which we control our lower nature. It is God's provision for man. It is the balance which he has given to the soul. It was meant to prevent men from dwelling too exclusively in the realm of the physical and material, as distinguished from the sphere of the spiritual and invisible.

Men say of the higher sentiments, "Oh! of course these things are very good; men ought to have the higher sentiments; but when one is among Romans he must do as Romans do." And so they accustom themselves, and encourage each other, in the market, on the street, and in places of pleasure, to act by the lower instincts and faculties, instead of the higher elements of the soul, which, when quickened by the divine Spirit, enable us to see God; which, when touched

by the Holy Ghost, leap up and mingle their forces with those of the intelligences above. Those sentiments are like angelic experiences. They bring the choral voices of heaven into the soul, and make men live as seeing Him who is invisible. So lived Moses, the old prophet and law-giver of the desert, whose name is honored among Jews and Christians alike—not by commerce with things which can be discerned by the senses, or explained by science, but by the intuitions of the spiritual life, which are able to quench all the temptations which come from the lower, basilar, fiery, flaming nature of man.

God grant that we may so live that at last, when the call comes for us to go hence, our passage from this life to the other shall be but a step from glory to glory.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, that thou hast taught us our way out from this lower life, beyond the senses; beyond the sentient; beyond reason even, to where faith guides; so that we stand in the invisible, and behold things that are not; so that we know things which lie beyond the sight, and live in things that are unknown in life. We thank thee for the sacred mystery of truth, and for those experiences which we know to be real, but which the eye cannot see, nor the hand handle, nor the tongue utter. That wondrous work which thou dost perform in the soul by the Holy Spirit, we discern, we experience, we rejoice in, at times, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And we pray that if we are thy children, we may not seem to be always strangers. If we are the King's children, sometimes may we know how to bear the part of princes. Grant that we may walk with faces upward; that we may take thereon the light which shines out from our heavenly abode, and our home. And when our hearts are heavy, and we know not what ails them; when we have grasped and taken in what the earth can give, and all that is but food to suggestion, and that raises our ideal of joy, and of love, and of power therein, higher and higher, till we look away from this life, and hope for the fulfillment of that of which the shadow only is given here, then we rejoice, O Lord! that thou dost bring thyself near, and bring us into reciprocal nearness, so that we may know thee as we are known of thee; so that though we do not see as we are seen, nor know as we are known, wholly, yet we are in the precincts of fulfillment, and are surrounded by great joy, and filled with great peace. And the memory of these days of transfiguration—how as a rudder it guides us in the perplexity of after times! And, though we travel forlorn, in desolate ways, in winter, and in the midst of chilling winds, we cheer ourselves by the memory of a thousand comforts lost or parted from; by the memory of days and of experiences that were, we comfort ourselves in drooping days, and days of darkness, when things are gone that were present to the sight, and experiences are dissolved, like the bubbles that are blown in summer, and like the bright pictures that were spanned upon them. And we believe that nothing comes without a cause; that there is no suggestion of a higher life, and no realization of anything above our senses, which is not inspired by the heart of God in the soul.

We thank thee for all these working things. And though sometimes, doubting and complaining, we wonder why, since thou art God, and we are so needy, thou dost not do more, and work us habitually into a spiritual frame of mind; yet at times, when we realize what we are, we marvel that thou dost work so much, and that we have no perception of those things which are so far above the flesh, and which require sensibilities so different. We admire and wonder, and praise thy name for our experience.

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt accept the desire (for what else can we offer?) which we have to be better, and purer, and truer, and to be lifted above the things which are passing. Accept our desire for a truer sentiment of things just, and generous, and pure, and holy. Accept the desire which we have to live near to God, and that without separating ourselves from men—nay, cleaving all the more to them by this divine power. Accept our desire to be cleansed utterly. Thou, O living Saviour! must cleanse us. It is the power of love only that can save us. And by love we shall be saved. Thy word is pledged. Thou wilt receive every one that comes to thee. None shall come in vain. And coming, none shall be cast out. For, although the largest entertainment may still be straitened among men, and the house be so full that even love can give no more room, there are many mansions in our Father's house—too many for the world ever to fill; and none shall be excluded or turned away. There is room for all. And, Lord, thou hast no conditions but that they need, and that they will accept.

Blessed be thy name for this fullness and freeness of invitation. Blessed be thy name for this largeness of mercy, which, beginning here in time, runs on down through ages uncountable, forever more fruitful, the fruit being more and more blessed. We rejoice in all these things. And yet, while we think of them, and compass them with great feeling thoughts, our imagination, overlapping them, still goes further, until the inconceivable rises as the cloud in the far distance, infinite still in the midst of all this expectation.

Thou art the God that dost exceeding abundantly more than we can ask or think. How great will be the triumph of thy grace, and the marvelous celebration of thy mercy to us, when we shall meet in Zion and before God! May none of us fail by the way, by quick flying temptations. May none of us be struck down unprepared. May none of us go steadily astray. May we cleave to the Lover of our souls. May we rejoice in the Lord, and be strong in the Lord, and in the Lord stand continually, and having done all, and overcome all, stand faithful and steadfast unto the end.

Bless those who are gathered together this morning. Comfort those who are drinking the bitter cup of affliction. And may they remember that the Lord drank before them, and, touching his lip to the cup, made it sacred; and as he would not put it from him, may none of them put it from them until his will shall be done.

And we pray that thou wilt give comfort and strength, in thine own time and way, to those who are weak; and direction to those who are in perplexity; and consolation to those who are disconsolate; and help to those that are in care and trouble in this world, that they may bear manfully their share of the world's burden, and do their duty wherever the Lord has appointed their way, more anxious to please thee in the place where they are, than to change it and find some fairer sphere.

We pray that thou wilt bless all the churches that are gathered together to-day. May thy servants preach the Gospel in simplicity and power from on high. And may thy people worship thee acceptably, and with great joy to their souls. We pray for the spread of the truth. We pray that throughout our land justice and righteousness, and purity may prevail. May we be saved from avarice, and greediness therein; and from pride of power. May we be saved from irreligion, and from outbreaking vices and crimes.

And we pray that thou wilt sanctfy the power and strength of this nation, and make it not selfish, nor grasping, nor cruel, but full of manhood, and full of protection to the weak, and full of blessings to all.

Pity the nations of the earth. Behold how they are driven, as in the night, upon the ocean, fierce winds drive fierce waves. Behold how the nations lift themselves up, and toss themselves in their fury before thee. O Lord! hast thou power to control the fury of the people? Hold back the guilty arms of the oppressors, and purge the minds of the nations from their guilty insanities. We beseech of thee that thou wilt stop the prevalence of war. And grant that these great evils which have made it needful, and which still require this medicine of God—the overflowing cup of fire itself,—may be purged away, and that justice and humanity may take the place of avarice and ambition. We pray that the time may speedily come when nations shall be permitted to be at peace, and when all shall know their true manhood in Christ Jesus, when men shall be self governed, and shall no longer need the iron scepter. And grant that the nations of the earth, thus rising into their true stature before God, may inherit this promise, long made, long delayed, long lingering and still to linger. Lord Jesus! make haste, for the whole earth doth wait for thee, and groans yet, and travails in pain. We beseech of thee, overturn and overturn, until He whose right it is shall come and reign.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray for thy blessing to rest upon the word spoken. Teach us all how to teach others. May our life itself be a teaching. Grant that we may so live as to be full of the fruit of the Spirit; that we may overflow in joy and peace; that we may have enough for ourselves and for others; that our hearts may be fountains at which the weary may drink. And grant that we may be more and more rich-hearted: that we may be saved from all those evolutions and oscillations, and incidental sins which come while striving to enlarge our nature God-ward. Yet grant that our faults, if we needs must carry them, as the weeds and tokens of the earthly state, may be faults on our heavenward side. And so may we live, never unconcious of our need of Christ; never unconcious that we are saved, not by right or merit of our own. So may we live that when we shall behold Jesus, we shall see in him all our victory, and recognize, in that glorious vision and moment, that power of thought and ideal by which we have been incited and carried on through life. And when we behold thee as thou art, and the mystery of our life is explained in thy look and in thy words, at thy feet, O Jesus! we will cast our crowns, saying, Not unto us, but unto thy dear name, be the praise of our salvation forever and forever. *Amen.*

TESTIMONY AGAINST EVIL.

"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."—Rom. XII., 9.

There is a coördination here. We are neither to be satisfied with hating evil, nor with loving that which is good. We are to do both. They stand in this intimate relation with each other, and are tests each of the other's genuineness, in that each begets the other. If a man hates evil, and it is a genuine moral revulsion, it will show itself to be genuine, among other ways, by this, that it will be accompanied by, or will have as its alternative, a strong attraction toward that which is good. On the other hand, if a man supposes that he loves that which is good, and springs to it with appetite and desire, he may test the reality and genuineness of that loving by the corresponding emotion —the abhorrence of its opposite.

It seems impossible that the soul should not act in this way. If it love concord, it must revolt at discord. So that these two phases are counterparts. One is the fulfillment of the other. A man who loves the truth must hate lies. A man who is sensitive to honor, must have great revulsion from everything that is dishonorable. A man that really loves purity, must really abhor impurity. If a man's heart goes out toward fidelity, he must have a great hatred of treachery. It seems impossible that the mind should act in any other way.

This is very strong language. *Abhor*—there is no stronger word than that in our tongue; and it does not strain the original at all. It is justified. And, on the other hand, *cleave* is an equally strong word. As a mother puts her arms around about the child in the moment of love, in the gush of affection, and holds it fast, so that nothing can get it away, and her clasp is a clasp of retention, so when we are commanded to "cleave to that which is good," it is as if it were said, "Love that which is good; hold it fast in your arms; do not let it be taken away from you." Both of these are pretty strong expressions, because the things that they mean are pretty strong, too: for intensiveness is the typical idea of Christian experience. Because there are in the New Testament such words as *mildness*, and *gentle-*

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ness, and *meekness*, a great many persons think that Christian character means a sort of pale, pulseless state of mind—a transparent nothingness—a bland emotion—a state that is like glass, which has no particular quality of its own—something that you can look through. But no; the typical idea of Christian experience is that of depth of power, preëminently. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbor,—not with a little gentle well-wishing, not with a little superfluous generosity after we have taken care of ourselves,—but *as* ourselves. It is a Lordly conception that comes into the idea of duty in the Christian life—something of largeness, and of power; so that when we love that which is good, we love it with vigor; and when we hate that which is evil, we hate it with thunder and lightning!

To be sure, we make allowance for men who cannot rise up to that; but we do not take them for our models. A man may be a Christian without any great power of hating; without any great power of loving; without any great power in his being, at any rate. But he is a babe; he is a child; and that is not the typical idea. We take the Bible notion of Christians. It is a thing of proportion. As we have power of excitability, and power of intense emotions, one way or another; as we have fervidness, or the power of burning, in our feelings, we are thereby brought into line with the typical Christian. So that we are to have the most vigorous likes and dislikes. *Likes* are not strong enough. We are to have the most vigorous *loves* and *hatreds* for things moral or immoral, as the case may be.

We are not, though, to suppose that this exhortation gives us the liberty to hate evil men. We are to hate *evil*. We are to abhor it. We read in the Scriptures, *Ye that love the Lord hate evil;* but nowhere, from the beginning to the end of the Bible is there an exhortation to hate wicked men. On the other hand, God, that is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;* whose fury against wickedness *burns to the lowest hell*, so far from hating men, loves them with an unutterable love—loves them with a love which could have been signified by nothing less than the death of Christ—the most stupendous exhibition of sacrifice and witness of affection that could be raised up in the circle of human experience and knowledge. And we are not to suppose, because we are commanded to abhor evil, that therefore we have a right to curse and swear at all wicked men, and hurl our denunciations at them. Far from it. Hate evil; but it is quite possible for a man at the same time to be full of sympathy and yearning toward men who are committing evil. There are none who know how to hate evil so much as those who love good. The largest love takes everything unto itself; it has pride in the object loved, and is made happy by

seeing the object of love beautiful, noble, excellent; and it is wounded by seeing the opposite qualities. There is nothing so sensitive to blemish, to disfigurement, to unsymmetry, as the truest love. A mother who loves the child may mask his faults, and may soften them, from the very pain that the recognition of them gives; but when she does discern a sin, a wasting and withering wickedness in the child, there is no one who abhors that evil so much as she. A mother's abhorrence of evil in her child is in the proportion of her love for that child.

Do you suppose there is any human being who hates drunkenness as much as the wife does, who cannot give up the husband of her youth. All her being is centered in him. All her early hope, all her love, went out unto him. She holds him with cords that neither life nor death can break. And yet, he is a drunkard. And if there is anything in this world that typifies hell, it is a pure and noble woman sleeping in the arms of a drunken husband. Is there anyone who does so abhor the passion and the evil as she who would lay her life down, if she could redeem him from it?

We are not, therefore, to suppose that because we are commanded to abhor evil, we are commanded to hate bad men, or to abhor them.

Men should have a clear and positive revulsion from evil for their own protection. It is not safe, considering what the nature of evil is, how it is graded, how it springs out of things that are not evil, or how it becomes so by circumstances, to look upon it with allowance. The power that evil has of masking itself, the power that it has of becoming beautiful, renders it the more dangerous. The fact that much in this life is an amalgam, made up of gold and base metal together; that good and evil are twined and plied together so that we are constantly in danger of taking the one for the sake of the other—these things require that a man who means to live a truly manly Christian life—a life of manhood in Christ Jesus being the highest type or conception of manhood—must train himself to abhor what is evil, or he will, in the adulterations of things, find himself drawn insensibly along, little by little, little by little. Plausible lies, and oblique deceits, and reflected dishonesties, and semi-transparent wickednesses—the thousand gradations on the scale—will lead him step by step, so that, if he have not a sovereign revulsion from wickedness, before he is aware he will have become an apologist for it, if not a partaker of it.

Such is the nature of the stomach that whatever things are revolting to it, it rejects. It throws them off spontaneously, and so saves itself. Yet it is quite possible for one, by minute tastes, to accustom himself to take arsenic, tartar-emetic, things the most destructive to the animal tissue and to all the functions of the prime organs; it is

quite possible for one, little by little, to keep on in such a course until he has medicated himself into a certain tolerance of things that are fundamentally injurious to his health and to his life. And as it is in physical things, so is it in moral. One may, by gradations of wickedness, by not looking at it with horror in its initial forms, in its slightest developments, as it were tone down his conscience, and bring it more and more to the level of wickedness, until it shall lose its sensibility and its power of discerning.

A great many men are wicked because they have not the sensibility that interprets to them what is the better; and a great many men are untrue and false because they have a blunt conscience, that does not discern that which is bad.

That power by which we quickly scent wickedness; by which we reject it, and lift ourselves above all its entanglements, and its fine threads, is this hating it—this abhorrence of it.

A good practical musician may stand in the midst of five hundred singers, and if there is one false voice in the whole five hundred, his ear hates discord so that he knows it. There may not be anyone else in the house who knows that there is a single voice below the pitch, or above the pitch, and he, perhaps, cannot tell where the trouble is, or just what it is; but he feels it.

It might be so with a man's conscience. He ought, as it were, to feel a discord in the chorus, a lowering of the tone, somewhere, which shall indicate at once that there is something wrong, even when it requires thought and analysis to detect what the wrong is. This refinement ought a Christian to reach for his own sake. Still more ought he to do it for the sake of the witness which every one owes to goodness, and against evil. For, we are "the light of the world" in proportion as we are enlightened by Christ. Good men are "the salt of the earth." Society defends itself by its hating power; and society is to be taught how discreetly to hate evil by the witness and testimony of Christian men.

There is a public sentiment in ordinary communities which sends crimes and vices into the shadow, so that wickedness of certain grades has to skulk. It is a sorrowful thing when crimes become tolerable, and when vices become respectable. The average conscience of any community must be deteriorated very much before men who are notorious for their various wickednesses can walk in the high places, and can be regarded as "hail fellows well met," and be permitted to hold the principal offices of trust and profit, and be honored and smiled upon, and everywhere greeted and recognized. A scoundrel, if he be clothed with king's robes, ought to be treated by every good man as if he were a scoundrel, so far as that is his typical character, and so far

as he puts that character out. You may pity him; you may labor for his reclamation; but if he is placed in such circumstances that he is represented by wicked conduct or by wicked actions, somewhere there must be a testimony of such horror and hatred of his wickedness that he shall be made to feel how hateful wickedness is. And the public sentiment of society ought to be made to feel how hateful wickedness is. If there is no reprobation of counterfeiting; if honest men, who never would counterfeit, still are charitable to take counterfeit money; if though they think it bad, and say that they would not take it if they could very well help it, they yet, when they have it in their hands will pass it along—then it will be sure to thrive. If men who are known to be genial, good fellows, and who are respected in the community, should say of counterfeiting, "It is bad, but there are worse things than that in society," what would become of our trust and security in regard to any circulating medium? But honest men hate counterfeiting. They frown upon all the spurious money which comes under their notice; and the result is that it has to sneak and go through society in the lowest channels, and the best way it can. But if there were no public sentiment, if there were no indignation of honesty, if there were no real honor that met this thing and frowned upon it, it would rise up at once. Wickedness in society is all the time seeking to gain ascendancy; and there is nothing to keep it down but that hatred of it which the educated conscience of society gives. How far up the common sewers of society shall rise, and how fast they shall send out their miasma, depends upon the education of the conscience of the Christian community. And a community that has been brought up to be tolerant of wickedness, or to find excuses for it, or to be indifferent to it, or to be good-natured over it, becomes a patron of wickedness, and demoralizes and weighs down that which God sent the Church and the Christian community to enlighten and to lift up.

I say that we are to abhor, and that our abhorrence is to be a very strong feeling. Some may be led to infer from this that when a man abhors evil he is to be harsh with it; that he is to talk loud against it; that he is to use violent language toward it; that he is to be intensely severe and unmeasured in dealing with it; that he is to tread it down ruthlessly. But that does not follow. A man may abhor evil and be very mild. A man may abhor evil and be silent. A man may abhor evil and be perfectly self-possessed and serene.

The single look of grief and surprise with which a pure and noble woman meets some unexpected trait of wickedness in her husband, is to him like Mount Sinai, and all its thunders. It is often said that the woman is the man's conscience. A great nature is often the conscience of a smaller nature. Where two natures are at all equally mated and

paired, they are a conscience to each other, reciprocal and interspheringing. But how often has a man in the presence of a virtuous wife or of a pure and noble mother, been struck through with a sense of wickedness by a single expression from her in respect to certain unlawful courses of his! There is nothing which makes wickedness seem so wicked as to bring it into the presence of its opposite, as embodied in a great nature. A person may abhor wickedness, and be very gentle, very mild, very sweet-spoken. One may have an abhorrence of wickedness that shall be like a spear perpetually, and yet be full of love, full of sympathy, full of goodness. It is not so much the rash, harsh, violent expression, that is called for, as it is that deep loathing, that settled aversion of the soul to all that is known and recognized to be evil. What is wanted, therefore, is positiveness of the whole strength of feeling—not violence of expression.

In this way, by the expression of its hatred, of its abhorrence, the Christian Church educates the community, cleanses its opinions, elevates its judgments, and redeems it from the perils which always are burrowing at the bottom of human life. But in order to do this, one must have a discriminating judgment and an educated conscience.

If a man should carry this idea of abhorring evil into all the little mistakes in life, he could commit no greater error. One of the great mistakes of Christendom is that it recognizes so many sins that are purely artificial, conventional, such as a man may commit without affecting his spiritual nature; and that it prescribes so many observances which, so far as a man's spiritual nature is concerned, it makes no difference whether he keeps or not. As matters of agreement between man and man, they may have some value; but further than that they are not essential. And yet, there are some persons who will visit with frowns and indignations a man who breaks a saint's day; while if he equivocates, as society allows persons to equivocate, dextrously and adroitly, they do not so much as rebuke him. We all of us think that a ragged beggar's lie is a grossly wicked lie; but a lie clothed in king's garments, a lie that shines, a lie that is witty, a lie that sparkles with intellection, men do not think is so very bad. They would burn a man who did not keep Sunday, and yet, they will not touch a man when he tells a smart lie. But the truth, which is the basis of confidence and trust between man and man, should be as pure as crystal. A man may be given over to his passions and appetites, he may be avaricious, he may be selfish, he may have the cruelty of pride, and still not be severely judged by his fellows. Men seldom visit things with the same condemnation that they do the violation of the conventional laws and rules and regulations of society—which are not without their value, which I do not deprecate nor depreciate, but which are not essential.

Now, I say, that if we are going to abhor evil, we must separate evil from mere conventional sins, and discriminate between them. Those things must be looked upon and treated as evil which the universal conscience recognizes as being wicked. On them must be put the signet of reprobation. While we are not blind to all milder evils, we cannot afford to lose the emphasis of our abhorrence by distributing it to everything alike. As if a man that has a dirty collar must be treated as if he had a dirty character! As if a man whose hands are unclean, and whose nails are unshorn, must be treated as if his heart were black with lecherous thoughts! As if a man that is coarse in his manners, must be treated as if he were coarse in his morals! It is the beast that is in men; it is the belluine appetites; it is the passions which are destructive to peace and happiness—it is these that we must intensify our abhorrence of. We cannot, therefore, afford to spread out our horror over all the little pecadillos and infirmities and nibbles and bites which come up in ecclesiastical orderings. It is the antagonist of love—it is selfishness, in all its moods and broods—that we must abhor.

There are certain things in which this may receive a closer application, and in which an application is very much needed.

In the first place, Christians—Christian men and Christian women; young men and maidens; all—ought to feel that they are called to witness their abhorrence in all the evil processes of society. There is a great deal that is allowed in society, that is tolerated there, although everybody admits that it is wicked. Society is full of permissions. It nests and burrows envies, and jealousies, and hatreds, and slanders. Malignant, various and most excoriating vices of the passions, there are in society. And it is the duty of every man and every woman to set their faces against these things, wherever they happen to be—no matter if they *are* in respectable circles. You are a servant of the Lord, and you are all to be tuned by His grace, and not by the tuning-fork of custom or fashion. Wherever you go, whatever thing is to your judgment and conscience abhorrent, you are to frown upon. I do not say that at all times and under all circumstances you are to speak of all the evil that you see; but you are never to allow yourself for one single moment to be on its side. Somehow or other every person in life ought to make his mark so that everybody shall know where he stands on the subject of tattling; of backbiting; of slandering; of tale-bearing; of eating and drinking his fellow-men. Society is full of cruelty. Doré's hideous pictures from Dante in which men are represented as gnawing skull bones in the infernal regions; in which men are represented as feeding off from their victims—these are enough to shock us, and drive us from all pictorial illustrations of that kind; but, after

all, we see these things in life. There is cannibalism around about us all the time and everywhere. Not a bird's leg is taken up and counted a more delicious morsel, and is more deliberately picked and chewed and relished in all its juices, than a person's reputation is taken up, and cut, and bitten, and sucked dry, and cast out. It is wicked; it is damnable; it is treason to man and treason to God; and yet such things are common. Why! men will not carry vermin on their heads nor on their bodies. Perfumed society—it would reject a poor miserable wretch that came into it! Yet men carry vermin in their souls, crawling and creeping all over them. But because they wear fine clothes and are very wealthy, or are in official positions, they are tolerated. And it is high time that men should learn to discriminate and hate these feculent vices of detraction, and bitterness, and envy, and jealousy—all those elements which spring from the lower regions, and which are of the evil spirit, and are made sacred in your eyes by the fact that they are permitted. But God ought to be greater than man; and the absolute truth of God ought to be more than the permissions of human society or the legislation of public sentiment.

That which is true in society ought also to be true in pleasure. What we need now in life, above everything else, is Christian men who take the lead in manly pleasures, and make them honorable and noble. Pleasure is of God. So is suffering. Joy and sorrow are both of them born of God. There is a manly way of enjoying one's self which is not only permissible, but most wholesome, and, in moral things, most beneficial. Let men be free to take all rational amusement, free to take joy, and that abundantly; and yet the moment pleasure, and its permissions, become soiled or even sullied, let men turn away from them, and scorn them, and loathe them, so that the world, looking on them, shall see that they are "men of pleasure," not in the sense that they are men of no conscience, but in the sense that they are men of eminent conscience.

All through society, the moment anything becomes pleasant, wicked men seem to gain ascendancy in it. Is it a joyous thing for men to sail their yachts? Speedily yachting falls into the hands of men who make it a round of dissipation. A yacht life is a life of Sodom, often. And it is a shame! Are athletic and exciting games wholesome and enjoyable? Speedily they fall into the hands of men who make them instruments of betting and cheating and stealing—for men that bet and cheat are gamblers, for the most part; and a gambler will steal if he has a chance, the world over, if you give him impunity and temptation enough. And so they are to be disallowed. Ten-pins and billiards—athletic games full of stimulus, and pleasure, and health—how quick they slip out of the hands of pure men into the hands of men that are

corrupt! What we need in society is men who shall assert the importance of exercise, and the law of manly pleasure—men that shall be free and bold, and that shall at the same time have eyes of flame, and hearts of purity, and shall drive away from the realm of pleasure all that is unmanly and unclean, and keep it away.

We need, also, in business, men of the same stamp; for business, while it is essentially founded on equity, while nothing is more equitable than its law of commerce or exchange, has in its actual conduct ten thousand pressures and influences which are evil in their tendency. Business is full of allowed wickedness. And there be many weak souls that, coming down into business, first stand silent, and then gradually lose susceptibility to things that are wrong, and finally begin to indulge in them a little in a cowardly way, and at last lose all conscience, and all faith in goodness in those directions, and plunge in boldly. And one upright, sagacious, successful man, that is all the time bearing witness to truth, to fidelity, to honor; one man standing up immaculate in the midst of men all around about him, and representing the superiority of virtue over vice, is a missionary. I think there are single men in Wall-street who do a thousand times more to create an abhorrence of evil than a hundred pulpits. And wherever a man feels himself to be a Christian, it is his business to carry this sense of honor—this discrimination between things right and wrong—and be ready to refuse peremptorily whatever violates his principles, and stand up for that which is true and right and pure, though he stands alone. And he need not blush because he is in the minority; for God stands behind any man who is standing up for a principle, or for a truth.

We need also to have testimony more and more as against gilded wickedness. And here I can give no better illustrations than those found in the realm of literature; although, in saloons, and in the various circles of higher life, there is much of wickedness gilded by genius. There is a popular impression that if a man has genius, it sanctifies anything that he may do—that is to say, if God gives a man ten talents, though he violate every one of them, he is not thought to be so wicked a man as a man who, having but one, violates that. Public sentiment exactly reverses the law of accountability as laid down in the New Testament. I hold that the man who is the most highly endowed has the most responsibility. God demands more, and society ought to demand more of him than of persons who are less highly endowed. Higher standards of conduct should be set up, and a purer life required, in proportion as men go up. There are no criminals like the unvulgar. There are no criminals like the men who think the furthest and the most brilliantly. And those men whom God has endowed with genius,

and who fill literature with salacious images and with music, so that the corruptest sentiments take on the choicest language and move in the most beauteous numbers, are satanic men, who put wreaths about their head; but every leaf will distil damnation, when God shall call them into judgment. There is no wickedness like that which is committed by genius, and committed in such a way that men are caught through their taste, through their intellect, through their appetites, through their nobler sentiments, and carried down to degradation, and to lust, and to destruction.

That is the peculiar trouble with the whole French school of reformatory novels. I am sorry to see, in places where I should not have expected to find it, approbation of George Sand's works, and a beginning to publish them in our language. Here is a woman of genius ridiculing in her works the sacredness of the marriage relation, in favor of a sort of ideal marriage relation which she thinks is still higher. Endowed with a marvelous power in literature, her whole temper and personal magnetism is in favor of unvirtue. But we do not need French morality in Anglo Saxon communities. It may be good reformation in Paris, but it is poor reformation here. There is Eugene Sue, and Dumas, and Victor Hugo, and a host of names with which, fortunately, I am not enough familiar to call off at hap-hazard, whose works, it seems to me, can only be read by morbid anatomists of literature. They are bad for the young, and there ought to be an emphasis against them in society, and in Christian families. Christian writers and teachers ought to denounce them, and bear testimony against them, such as to prevent their currency. It is said, "It will make people read them more." Yes; but it will make them read as criminals, and not as respectable men. The moment a man puts a book in his pocket, and reads it by stealth, it has gone out of the range in which it is liable to do much harm. The moment a book is made disreputable, so that persons who read it have to do it by stealth in order to keep respectable, it has lost much of its power for evil. Common literature is becoming more mighty than any other; more mighty than the sword or the purse; and the world is coming more and more under the dominion of it. And there need to be Christian legislation, a Christian public sentiment, and Christian canons of judgment; and nowhere more than just there is it necessary that men should be trained to abhor evil, no matter how gilded or beautiful, or musical. It is all the worse if it is beautiful. Poison disguised is no less poison, but it is more likely to be taken.

And lastly, men must bear a testimony, in such a nation as this, that shall be felt perpetually on the subject of political wickedness. Men who are in high places form a kind of public sentiment; they

separate themselves from the mass of men for the time being, and so, too often, they lose sensibility to the general public sentiment. We do wrong to ourselves, to our children, and to the commonwealth, when we permit wickedness in high places to go unrebuked. It ought to be rebuked in the pulpit, in the street, on the exchange, everywhere. When men have done wickedly; when they have done those things which touch the foundation of morality, unless they repent and turn away from their wrong courses, they ought not to be encouraged by even your social recognition. I know of men that I would not accept an introduction to. I could not consent to put myself on terms of equality with them. I would go to them as I would go to a man under sentence of death, to win him to repentence; I would go to them as a minister, and a missionary; I would go to them, if peradventure I might pluck them *as brands from the burning;* but where it is a question of social equality, I could not consent to stand side by side with them, and have it supposed that I regarded them on a level with a Christian man and gentleman. Such things are guarded in some nations where there are ranks and orders of nobility, but there is no such thing as that with us. There is in a democracy but one thing that can save us, and that is the aristocracy of Christian virtue. And the light of the heart of Jesus shining on things permitted, and on things not permitted, is to be our guide. And the business of the Church is to raise up a testimony that shall make itself felt, and that shall keep up the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, selfishness and benevolence, so that no man can go to the one side or to the other without knowing it. That is what is meant by being "the light of the world." It is not that we are to preach doctrine—though that comes in incidentally; but that we are to make the lines and land-marks so clear that they cannot be removed by mistake, but only by malice prepense. So the Church will become more and more an ensample and witness, and more and more an encourager. And it will require some courage, especially for the young, and, for that matter, for the old; it will require some courage for men who have not been very positive and decided, and for men whose interests frequently lead them to wink at things which are wrong—it will require some courage for them to become witnesses against evil. But what is your faith in Christ worth, what is your hope in Jesus worth, what is your belief in the life everlasting worth, what is your confidence in purity and in the sweetness of the heart of Christ borne into your heart worth, if they do not strengthen you to bear testimony to the right and against the wrong wherever you go. Wherever there is wickedness, somebody must abhor it: not clamorously; not vindictively; not harshly; but firmly. You must set over against the wickedness of this world its opposite—

purity and virtue; and with such emphasis that men shall see how lovely the one is, and how hateful the other is.

So, then, without urging you to become malignant reformers, or, still less, denouncers and destroyers, I would say, *Abhor, in all things, that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.* And the harvest and fruitfulness and beauty of that good to which you cleave, and which you caress—that it is which shall make your testimony against evil medicinal, remedial, not poisonous.

May God grant that in that great conflict, whether silent or clamorous, which is going on between the power of light and the power of darkness, between purity and impurity, between selfishness and unselfishness, between divine virtue and infernal malignity, every one of us may bear the name of Christ, and may be found on the side of truth and of virtue and of piety, *abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Heavenly Father, led by thy hand; for Jesus is our Elder Brother. We know him; and in him we know thee. Yet, not as a stranger do we draw near to thee. We have come so often, thou hast made thyself through infinite condescension so gentle unto us, and so familiar, that we are as children coming home. We have brought so many wants in time of trouble; we have come weighed down with so many burdens, pierced with so many experiences, and tried by so many temptations, that we come with confidence. We have put thee to proof, and found thee doing exceeding abundantly more than we asked or thought; so that we come familiarly, most boldly, to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need.

We thank thee that thou hast made this way so glorious to us that not men who love most, nor those who are strongest, are so much to us as thou art, that dwellest in silence. There is a strength of succor above the sight, and beyond our reach. All things and all men that work for us in this sphere below are influenced by thy gracious Spirit to do it. Thou art the Fountain and the source of all help. Our life is in thee. We live upon thy laws. We live in the secret searching providence which constantly liminates evil, and brings in good We live by those powers in ourselves which burn only as thou pourest fuel upon them. All that we have had, we have had from thee. All that by which we are sustained is of thee. All the ends towards which we are pressing forward are marked out by thee. And we rejoice that when we sin, and fall into suffering, and into disgrace, it is of thee that we are restored. It is not what thou hast done, but what thou art, that gives us hope. For thou hast disclosed the ineffable love of thy paternal heart to us. It is thy nature to forgive. It is thy heart's desire to cleanse. It is the peculiarity of thy holiness to nurse and patiently bring up holiness in others. And thou hast made it manifest in thy Son, and in his sacrifice, that sin is pardonable. And in him we have confidence as interpreting to us the whole glorious nature of a God who is willing to suffer rather than that we should suffer; of a God who would rather restore than punish; of a God who desires a remedy for sin, more than to crush it and make it final.

Thou, O Lord our God! dost behold the ineffable sinfulness of sin; and we are glad that it does not drive forth from thy heart flames that shall consume and devour the sinner; but that from thy heart come forth all the remedial tides of mercy and of love, that men may live, and be restored, and become trophies of thy redeeming grace.

And grant that our hearts may become like thine, that we too, may have great hatred for things uniquitous; that we may abhor evil; that we may cleave to that which is good; and that we may be able to redeem men from evil, and, in a spirit of kindness, restore such as have gone astray.

And we pray thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who are laboring for the reclamation of men from evil; for the restoration of society to virtue and to purity; for the establishment of good morals; and for the inculcation of true piety. May they never grow weary or faint. Multiply the number of those that shall go forth as heralds of Christ to preach the Gospel, and the unsearchable riches thereof. We pray that thy kingdom may come everywhere, and that wickedness may flee away; and that all darkness, and selfishness, and cruelty, and ignorance, and superstition, and tyranny, may henceforth be cleansed, and that that joyful day of deliverance may come which is shouted alike by angels in heaven and saints upon earth.

And to thy name shall be the glory of this triumph, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wouldst bless the word of admonition. Grant that by the light of the Holy Spirit it may take possession of our understandings; and not only of our understandings, but of our will; and that it may come down into our life. So sanctify us and fill us with all goodness, that everywhere we go, even by our silent example, we shall be witnesses against evil. We pray for more and more power on the side of goodness. Behold thy cause. How it struggles, often overborne! How yet the prince of the power of the air carries with him fashion, and beauty, and all things that fascinate the fancy and the imagination. Lord God, we pray for the purification of life. We pray for the ennobling of men. We pray for the weakening of those that destroy, and for the strengthening of those that would build up. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on the earth as it is in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

THE DANGER

OF

TAMPERING WITH SIN.

I shall call your attention to the history which is contained in the 8th chapter of 2nd Kings, from the 7th verse to the 15th inclusive.

"And Elisha came to Damascus."

Elisha and Elijah were two eminent prophets. Elijah had, not a great while before, disappeared. He was an extraordinary man, stern, imperious, dramatic to the last degree. Elisha was a milder, a far more gentle man; and in his life you will find less rebuke of wrong, less war against evil, and more works and miracles of mercy and of kindness. Nevertheless, a venerable figure he was, standing out and apart upon the background of that dark day in an eminent manner. These old prophets had no prescribed bounds. They roamed to and fro as the spirit carried them. They appeared sometimes in one part of the kingdom and sometimes in another. Occasionally, they had their regular circuits. Samuel did; but he combined with the functions of the prophet's office the judicial functions. Elijah did not. He sometimes watched the imperial power, to judge and to condemn and to execute. Elisha seems almost never to have gone to any such extremes as that; but he had rather a wandering nature—a habit of life impossible to such a state of society as ours, but peculiarly congenial to the condition of things in that nation, and in Oriental nations generally. And at that time he had, for some reason (it is not stated what), gone to Damascus, which lies at the northeast of Palestine.

While there, one day it was told him that the whole street was filling up; that there was a great company of men and a great company of camels. Some one counted the camels. There were forty of them. And the attendants were numerous. They wore the king's livery. And there were distinguished officers among them.

"Benhadad, the King of Syria, was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God has come hither."

A most excellent name for an old public servant to honor. Pro-

Sunday Evening, December 19, 1869. Lesson: James I. 12-27. Hymns (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 733, 531, 657.

phets did sometimes honor it. But there have been public servants who have lived long lives, and whom nobody thought of calling *men of God.* But this man, who had been, it might almost be said, in supreme influence, during his time, in his nation, was known even in foreign courts as "the Man of God."

The officer was brought into the prophet's presence. His name was Hazael. He came from the king; and this is the reason of his coming:

"The king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him and said, Thy son, Benhadad, King of Syria, hath sent to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?"

When kings, when great men are well and are in their royal clothes, they are a great deal better than common folks—at any rate they think so. And common folks are apt to think so too. There is a great deal of worshipping of great men; but there are no men so great that when they are sick they are not just as childish, and just as weak and feeble as anybody else. When a fever takes hold of a man, it never asks "Who is he?" And when a man lies unnerved, unstrung, with all the world apparently passing away from him, his head racked with shooting and fiery pains, and every bone in his body as it were disjointing itself; when a man lies thus a prey to sickness, what is his crown to him? What is his sceptre to him then? What are his treasures to him then? What to him, then, are all the things which he has done in the past? When men lie sick, there is no difference between one and another. And this old Oriental king, who, when he was well, was so proud and haughty, when he was sick sent his chief servant Hazael to "a man of God," saying, "Shall I recover of this disease?" For, as the sequel shows, he was very weak indeed—so weak that he could not lift a cloth. The prophet answers:

"Go say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit, the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die" [that is to say, there is nothing in his disease to carry him off; and yet he is going to die.]

And then, as the man stood before him, the prophet, lowering his face, gazed full into his eye. He spoke nothing, but looked him through and through, till Hazael could not stand the gaze any longer. He was utterly confused by it. This is the language:

"He settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept."

In other words, he brought his face down, and looked steadily and sternly into Hazael's face, and Hazael was ashamed. He was confused, and he lost countenance before the prophet; and at that the prophet burst into tears.

"And Hazael said, Why weepeth my Lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children and rip up their women with child."

This declaration shot unaffected horror through the mind of Hazael. He was not a man prepared for the allegation of such cruelties. I have no doubt that his horror was genuine; that it was not dramatic nor excusatory, but real.

"And Hazael said, But what! is thy servant a dog that he should do this great [this abominable] thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."

From that moment, the idea began to take on an active form in his mind-work. And he went back and began his career by telling an out and out lie.

"What said Elisha to thee? [said Benhadad] and he answered, He told me that thou shouldst surely recover. And it came to pass on the morrow that he took a thick cloth and dipped it in water and spread it on his face, so that he died. And Hazael reigned in his stead."

A man extremely reduced by sickness and enfeebled, with a thick cloth thus laid and held over his face, would suffocate speedily; and Hazael took this method, doubtless, that there might be no inquiry; that it might seem that the king had died a natural death. Having put all the men out of the palace, as we may suppose he did, he resorted to this cunning expedient. It may be that he would have experienced a horror at the idea of spilling blood; but then, to take a man's breath away by a clean method, in a skillful manner, was very different, he reasoned, from spilling his blood. He would not do such a thing as shed a man's blood; but he would take a cloth and spread it over his face. And he did not kill the king. It was not he! But the king was dead. And so, as the next step, the army being in his hands already and there being no contestant, he took the crown and sceptre, and was on the throne.

Now the first question which arises here is, was it right for the prophet to put this thing in Hazael's mind? Ought the prophet to have stirred up in him this ambition? Was it right for him to give him encouragement, or even suggestion of the possibility of his reigning in the stead of Benhadad? There is no evidence that the prophet did first put it into his mind, and much evidence that he did not. It is very certain that he did not put into his mind any suggestion of the steps by which he was to become king. It might have been by succession; it might have been years afterwards and in some regular order. There is not a word in the prophet's history which shows that he suggested to Hazael the road by which he was to come to this power, or the method by which he was to attain it. That was Hazael's own work. All he could say was, "The prophet has shown me that

at some time and in some way, I am to be king;" and he found out the time and the way himself.

It is evident, too, that it was only a spark that fell on tinder that was already there. No man can be tempted suddenly to great crime. It is contrary to the nature of the soul. There is to be a preparation for all great wrongs in the foregoing tendencies of the person that commits them. No man becomes a tyrant in a day. No man becomes a miser in a day. No man becomes a drunkard in a day. No person becomes a termagant in a day. No person falls into any great extreme suddenly, as down a precipice. Men come to these things little by little. And if Hazael deliberately committed murder, he had thought about murder before. One man might kill another in a passion without having pondered the matter; but no man ever deliberately killed another man who had not thought about it before. No man ever committed an illustrious wickedness without having pondered, if not the thing itself, yet the possibilities of it. Men think, oftentimes, "I would not kill that man—of course I would not; but then, what if he were killed? What would happen?" And then they detail to themselves all the blessings which would come from it. "With this obstacle out of my path," they say, "there would be this benefit to me; this augmentation of my estate; this increase of my power." And so men build castles in the air, and brood upon wrong and crime, and prepare themselves, by brooding, for giving away under temptation.

Now, do you suppose Hazael had never had in his mind the thought, "Why should not I be king?" He had administered the king's whole power. He had tasted the sweets of power. He had known all the machinery of government. And he had said often to himself, "The sword fits my hand, as well as my organization; and why would not the sceptre too?" He had pondered this question; and doubtless he meant at some time or other to take advantage of his position and sit upon the throne. And when the prophet said to him, "God has revealed to me that thou shalt be king," it did not teach him anything that he had not thought of before. It was just what he had thought about. And he turned his face and said, "Is it not time for me to be king? And what is in the way? What is easier than to put this old sick, weak king out of the way? I will do it." And he did do it. And it was his fault.

Then what of that exclamation of horror—"Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" This was not uttered in reference to the fact that he was to be king, but in reference to the declaration that when king he would be a cruel king, and that he would seek the destruction of Israel, and murder women and children, and

exercise power in the most tyrannical and oppressive manner. It was at this that Hazael revolted. And yet, it came to pass that he reigned for about forty years in Damascus; and during that time he wrested away from Israel all their possessions east of the river Jordan (they were extensive and valuable possessions) and drove them through the land even into Philistia. And he laid siege to Jerusalem. And after destroying the land, he was bribed from taking the city of Jerusalem only by receiving all the treasures of the temple. And in his military career he did inflict all the miseries that had been foreshadowed by the prophet, and more.

From this history some points of instruction may be derived.

You cannot predict, from a man's early natural disposition, what he will be capable of. There is a gradual unfolding which takes place both in good and in bad. And though it is true that a naturally good disposition is a very great advantage, and creates some presumptions in favor of a man, yet natural dispositions are not enough. Men need something more than that which simply makes them appear amiable and lovely in the beginning. For, if a man has ever so amiable and kind a disposition, it is possible for him to lapse from one step to another, and from that to another, and from that to yet another, until by-and-by he is far down below that disposition. Nothing can save a man but firm habits, steadfast principles, and the grace of God in confirmation of them. No natural endowment of amiableness can keep a man from being spoiled; for although a man may not, with such a disposition as this, rush into every sin, yet every man will be tempted according to the disposition that is in him. And though he may not be accessible to all kinds of sin and temptation, yet there is some one line in which he is accessible. Every man may be so tempted that, although in his youth everything was fair, in his old age everything turns out blighted.

If you could, by some power from on high, go back and read the early history of men who have made shipwreck of life; if you could look upon the faces which they bore when they were beautiful, amiable, sweet children, beloved of father and mother, and around whom all hopes clustered; and if you could see how promising was their early manhood; and then contrast this with their old age, when they are blighted, scarred with passions, disgraced by crime, utterly wrecked morally, you would be amazed at their rapid and complete deterioration. There has been many a man who has swung on the gallows, and many another who ought to; there has been many a man who has lain in prison, and many another who ought to have been his companion; there has been many a man who has been marked by public reprobation; there has been many a man that has been swept by

bankruptcy and disgrace, who in the beginning of life had just the same chance of being honored and beloved while living, and lamented when dead, which those men had who have reached saintship. You cannot tell by the way a man feels to-day how he will feel a year hence, or six years hence.

It is not enough, then, that a man should have simply good dispositions or good intents. When Hazael received the declaration that he should become a monster of cruelty there can be no question but that it affected him with horror. He did not believe it then. And yet, the seed and root were in him, and it required but the appropriate circumstances and temptations to bring them out.

This leads me to say that men are capable of a course at which their whole nature revolts. But it must be through a gradual reduction to a lower condition. Each step toward it will be slight. There will be few plunges in the early periods of decadence. Men do at first things that are right in themselves. Then they go still further along through things that are not wrong in themselves.. Then they go still further along in things that, if they are equivocal, can scarcely be called positively pernicious. I think that men in evil courses are like persons who go down winding stairs. The upper stairs hide the lower ones, so that they can see only three or four steps before them. Men go down courses of pleasure and vice and crime, seeing only one or two steps in a whole career. And so each step is a slight one. Although the whole of their career may be monstrous, there is no one single point of it, clear down to its very last stages, that taxes very much their fear or their conscience. Men seldom, until they become hardened, do wholesale wickedness. That is the last part. That takes place when men are given once to do iniquity. But in all the early stages, in all those periods in which men think they are perfectly safe, the peculiarity is that they take short steps, and but few of them, adding a little more to-day, and a little more to-morrow, and a little more next week, and a little more next month, and a little more next year, and a little from year to year. And so they are gradually demoralized and carried down, until at last they are destroyed. That which there was no power to do suddenly, in time they have done themselves. There are persons, some forty-five and some fifty years old, some younger and some older, of whom people, looking on them, would say, "What monster is that?" And yet they are persons who came to their degradation without a shock, little by little, little by little.

This is the reason and philosophy of keeping aloof from courses which lower the moral tone of the mind. There are very many courses in life which are wrong, not because the things themselves are wrong, not because the immediate consequences are mischievous, but because

they have an effect upon the mind to lower its moral tone. A man, for instance, may begin in things that at first do not particularly violate honor. He may be sensitive and high-minded. And yet these things may have a tendency to depress the tone of honor. And they may be repeated until by-and-by that man's feeling on the subject of honor and his power of resistance to dishonor, is so dull and feeble that when there comes, at length, after this discipline and gradual change, the appropriate temptation, he will do that which is dishonorable and scarcely feel it. It is the early steps that lead a man to wrong under such circumstances. They gradually bring him into a condition in which he is predisposed to wrong.

Men are seldom stricken down with malaria when they first go into malarial regions. Frequently the disease does not show itself until the second or third year. And persons living in new countries often rejoice in their immunity. I have lived where chills and fever was prevalent, and heard a great deal about it, and seen other people have it; and I noticed that often they escaped until the second year; but during the first year they were breathing the malarial atmosphere, and a gradual process of poisoning was going on in them which had not disclosed itself. But the moment it did disclose itself they broke down under the disease. I feared that I should have it; but I was not susceptible to such things. I seemed to have a peculiar temperament in that respect. The facts, therefore, showed that a man in one state being attacked by disease would take it, whereas a man in another state would not. If a man has vigor and resiliency of nerve; if there is that in him which, when he comes into the atmosphere of contagious diseases fights them and throws them off, then he can walk in the midst of dangers and be safe. But if there is a certain lack of tone and resisting power in his system, he breaks down.

It is precisely that state which is the most dangerous in the early life of young men and maidens. It is that moral condition in which there is a want of tone and resisting power, so that when sudden temptation comes upon them their system breaks down under it. It is not alone necessary that a man should not do technically wrong. You are not safe when you simply keep your feet from known sins. No man is safe who does not keep his heart as in the fear of God. A man must *abhor* wickedness. He must *love* that which is right. In this temperament, if I may so say, of the soul there is safety; but there are ten thousand flitting pleasures, ten thousand associations, ten thousand acts in the life of young men and maidens, which, though they are not wrong in themselves, have a tendency to drag men down lower and lower, and more and more weaken their resisting power and prepare them for the attack of evil when it comes by-and-by. And one

reason why so many fall so quickly and so completely when the stress of temptation overtakes them, is that they have been gradually and imperceptibly brought into a condition in which they were predisposed to corruption under evil influences. Their final destruction is the legitimate result of the way in which they have been tampering with themselves.

People say, "Is it wrong for a man to read any books he chooses, if he never allows himself to go wrong? There are books, of course, that I should not want to read in my family, nor in the presence of ladies; but they are extremely entertaining and I read them; and I do not think that there is any danger in it for me. Why not read all books and see all sorts of pictures and places?" Because no man can render himself familiar with such things, even out of curiosity, without marring his purity, without dulling his sensibility, without lowering the tone of his resisting power, in which is his safety. I do not care who you are, if you acquaint yourself with evil from no other motive than curiosity, you are not safe. A man who, as a teacher, or a censor in literature, has the unpleasant duty imposed upon him of probing and exposing wickedness, may fulfill that duty and not be harmed, for the reason that he is acting with his mind under the predominant influence of benevolence and obligation; but when a man, merely for the sake of gratifying his curiosity, goes into the midst of things that are perverting in their tendency, he is taking out of his nerve that which gives his nerve the whole of its preservative power. I regard, therefore, as most pernicious, the familiarity which men have with bad men; with vulgar courses; with low conversation; with obscene wit and stories. Men who call themselves respectable are accustomed to listen to operas and plays that are inherently bad, as portraying the most loathsome crimes and vices. There is many an opera in New York whose central element is reeking lust of the most detestable and hideous character. Nothing can be worse. But then they take a silk string and wind about it; they cover it up with exquisite little airs and melodies and scenes, and men go to enjoy themselves; and more and more they become fascinated, and gradually they lose their manliness. If you say anything to them on the subject, they say, "Why, I do not care for those things." Ah! can a person let those outrageous abominations be dressed up so exquisitely and dance so gaily before their eyes that they do not think they are wicked, and be unharmed? I do not believe in that purity or that integrity which can become so accustomed to prurient sins in life that they gently pass before them without a revolt. I believe that as a true ear is actually pained by hideous discords, not because the books or the philosophy of music proclaims that they are disagreeable, but because they stab the ear; so a pure

nature hates all that is salacious, not because custom or religion says it is bad, but because all the power of the soul feels that it is positively abominable. And if to any persons they are not abominable, it is because they have lost their sensibility. There are a thousand things which men do, and which are permitted to be done in society, which wear away the enamel, rub off the bloom, destroy the freshness of the sensibility, but their ultimate tendency is not taken into account and men think they are not dangerous. There are a thousand liberties that men take in the various relations of life which are full of peril. Little things they are; but the very grounds on which we stand in maintaining decorous observances in the family and in the community, are the grounds on which we are to stand in condemning these little levities. They gradually lower the tone of the moral feelings, till by-and-by all resisting power is gone, so that when temptation comes all is destroyed.

Children should be taught that the customs and observances of society which have relation to propriety of conduct, are not founded on simple prejudice but are the results of wise legislation and experience, and that they stand between a man and corruption.

I have given a direction in respect to the passions; but the same is true in respect to all the other great master influences. A child is brought up wholesomely, and the law of the household is that a man ought never to praise himself and seek flattery, or anything of the kind. At length he goes into society, where compliments and flatteries are exchanged, and where everybody is fishing for compliments and flatteries. "Have you one for me? I have one for you." This is everywhere going on. And the child at first is shocked. But after a time his sense of propriety becomes accustomed to it. And by-and by he is just as big a peacock as anybody. And every single step from beginning to end of this change is a step of decadence and decline.

The same is true of pride. And the same is true, also, of avarice. A man may begin very generously; and by almost imperceptibly minute steps he may become a hard-handed curmudgeon.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the ends thereof are death."

There are very few people who, if they saw the ends of wrong courses, would venture upon them. There are very few people who, if they traced the results of evil-doing to the end of life would indulge in it.

There are thousands of persons whose lives were nobler in the family than they are in the world. There are thousands of men who had more honor and principle and generosity and moral purity, when they left their father's house, than they have ever had since. Honor

that man who has gone through life without loss in real manliness, and increasing in moral vigor and purity all the way down. Happy is that man who grows better as he grows older. But how many are there of such? Have you grown better from your childhood up? Do you think you are cleaner-minded than you ever were before? Do you think you have a truer conscience, a more sensitive honor and a greater abhorrence of all that is mean and wicked? Do you feel that you have become attuned and chorded in integrity by the whole effect of life upon you?

Irreverence is permitted in the same way. There is every temptation in society to irreverence. Sacred things are handled familiarly by men. There is such a disposition to boldness, and rank, intemperate familiarity which grows up with democratic institutions, that neither the Church, nor any sacred book, nor usage, nor thing, nor even the name of God has any considerable respect among men.

Men ask me, "What is the harm of profanity? When a man says '*Damn*,' he does not mean *Damn*. When a man says 'Curse it,' of course he does not mean *Curse it*. And when he uses great oaths, he does not really mean anything bad. There is no great harm in that, is there?" Is there no harm in a man's pursuing a course which steadily wears out the whole sentiment? Is there no harm in reading books that lower your faith or belief in truth? Is there no harm in talking with men who destroy your confidence in things spiritual? Is there no harm in indulging in expressions with regard to things sacred, that are like rasps, wearing down the very surface and taking off the very skin? There is harm in all the various modes of destroying sentiment and the root of veneration and reverence.

Now in all these things I go back again to the thought that in the beginning men do not mean wrong.

When fishermen are on the shore looking for bass and bullfish, they are accustomed to chop up a great deal of bait when the tide is right, and let it float out as a kind of lure. And the fish, that have a kind of telegraphic communication of their own, pass the word round, "There is something to eat;" and they come flocking up in shoals; and one seizes one morsel, and another another morsel, and another another; till by-and-by the cunning fisherman puts a morsel on a hook and throws it out. And soon some unsuspecting fish comes up and takes it, hook and all, and presently he is flopping on the shore!

It is just so that the devil fishes for men. There is this morsel here, and that morsel there, which men take with impunity; and they think there is no danger and wax bold; and by-and-by they get hold of a morsel with a hook in it. It is not wise for men to feed where there are fishermen about, fishing for their souls that they may destroy

them. Ten thousand things there are which are "innocent in themselves," as men say, but which are thrown out as lures, and by which multitudes are drawn into things which are not innocent. Hence it is that men are not to consider themselves safe when they simply watch against specific evils. We are to watch against particular temptations; but we are also to watch our inward dispositions. A man is to watch the whole temper of his mind and soul. When he does this, and only then, he is safe.

It is declared in the passage which I read in the opening service,

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

There is a period in the future, there is a coming time, when the thing which at first seemed so harmless shall be grown, and shall bring forth its fruit, and shall prove to be a monster, and turn and devour you. Therefore you are to take care of the foregoing dispositions and early states and stages of your experience.

I would to God that some prophet could come with authority, and stand in my place, and lower his face, and look fixedly upon the young that are here. I wish that at that young person, cheerful, gay, sweet-minded, apparently amiable and gentle, but with a rotten point of self-indulgence in him, which leads him to live from day-to-day for the present sensation, for the pleasure of the present hour, without regard to the benefit of to-morrow or the next hour—I wish that at that young person the prophet could stand and look, prophesying, and showing what that self-indulgence will lead him to far down in his career, and how it makes him accessible to all those who can tickle his vanity, and renders him a prey to every seduction, and will leave him, by-and-by, a child of damnation. Oh! thou round of cheek, smooth of brow, and serene of eye, thou wilt die in a brothel! "What," you say, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" Oh no, not now—not until you have forgotten much of home; not until you have had wound around you the fascinations of flattering society; not until a thousand influences have dazed your mind; not until the day appointed comes. But then, "*when lust hath conceived, it will bring forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, will bring forth death.*"

Is it cruel to say so? But oh! is it not a greater cruelty that it should be true? My heart is pained when I know what is going on in life. Hideous stories come down to us of monsters of mythology that claimed some virgin at every festival to be given to its maw; but we sacrifice, not single ones, but hecatombs. And how cool is the public pulse! how little indignation there is! How many there have been, born and built with angelic mould, full of thought that might have made them majestic as kings and transcendent in loveliness, whose

early steps were such as to lower their moral tone, and who kept sliding down and down until they were destroyed, utterly and without remedy.

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

I would that the prophet could lay his eye upon some young men that I see, who are healthy and strong and noble in their purposes, but who say that they are going to be free and independent, that they are not going to be bound by superstitious precedents. Wine bad? Not to them. Tippling bad? "Yes, to fools, but not to young men of my spirit." Drinking in a social way bad? They scorn the idea that they need to bind themselves with a pledge, or to turn out of their way to insure them against becoming drunkards. Oh Prophet! where art thou? Look upon these young men, and say to them, "I see you early overthrown; I see you early death-struck; I see you dying in disgrace; I see you lying in a drunkard's grave." They would say, "Is thy servant a dog, that these things should be true of him?" Yes, you are a dog, of whom just these things are true. If you are not afraid; if your hand is reached out for the cup when it is red and you have no concern; if you scorn the warning which is afforded by ten thousand instances of men who are just as good as you, and just as strong as you are, but who tampered with the cup and were destroyed, it requires no prophet to foretell the issue. I can myself tell what the end shall be. Here are thousands and thousands, and some that I know, who are dying now from this very cause. Their life looked as fair as yours; their hopes were as bright as yours; they were as certain of their power to retrace their steps in time to save themselves as you are; and yet they have fallen and are perishing. Oh! that men would ponder these things.

I behold men of generous impulses starting in life on certain courses; and I know what the end will be. I see men sacrificing themselves for gain. I see men giving their time for mere money. They do not care for the welfare of the community. They are not interested in charitable enterprises. They have no sympathy for the unfortunate classes. And yet they are men who, before they were attacked by the delirium of avarice, had generous and noble natures. I know what will become of them. They grow up more and more avaricious and less and less manly. As their riches increase, their manhood dies out. And I see them forsaking, one after another, their old companions that are not profitable. I see that as they pile up treasure, their generosity diminishes. There is a fever of gain which a man who is inspired to watch can discern. And I see them at last, lying back in their pondering moments, and turning over and over their money. Night and day they live for money. And every other thing is destroyed in them

except the love of gain. They are utterly carried away by avarice. If I had told them when they began, that they were coming to this, they would have said, "Is thy servant a dog?" And yet, those very steps which they were then taking were steps by which they would inevitably become misers.

And so of every other wrong course—for time fails me, and I can not carry out in detail any further, the thoughts which are suggested by this general history.

We are all of us either advancing from strength to strength to appear before God, or we are, consciously or unconsciously, drifting further and further from the early period of innocence; from the early honor; from the early faith. We are drawing near to the heavenly land; but oh! with what freight do we go? What have we in the world? What has been our life? We had a fair start, most of us; how have we improved our opportunities? There are some who had not a fair start. There are some who had drunken parents. I have in my mind now two men who were the children of worthless parents, but who worked upon the farm to support themselves and earned their way through college; and now both stand high in the Christian ministry. And I know men who were born of Christian parents, who were the children of Christian ministers, and who had everything to help them, both in regard to organization and precept, during their childhood, but who have worked their way straight down, until they are miserable wrecks and outcasts. But, thank God! if there are persons that go away from the Christian instruction of their childhood, there are also persons who do not. I have known many persons who, though they came out of the battle scarred, nevertheless grew better as they grew older. Are you growing better as you grow older?

Fellow citizens, men, brethren, is not this practical business? The year is drawing to an end. You are going fast to your account. I see in many of you the signs of decay. I bear them myself. I am no longer a young man; and you, many of you, have passed your youth. Do you ever take an account, an inventory with yourself? Do you ever say, "What am I? How do I compare with what I used to be? Am I harder, or more generous? Am I truer, or am I less scrupulous? Have I divine wisdom, or have I sneering, worldly wisdom?" Are you nearer to the spirit of Christ than you used to be? Are you nearer to the spirit of God? Are you better prepared for the society of angels than you were half a score of years ago? Does the world hold you less tenaciously than it did? Do you feel prepared to let go, if it be the will of God, this year? Can you say, when you meet your God, not, "I am spotless"—oh, no; but, "I love, I honor, I adore Thee above all, as the Chief among ten thousand and the one altogether

lovely?" Is the language of reverence and love possible to your life? How have you been living? How are you living? Will you not take this home to yourself to-night, and make inquisition into yourself? You know better than anybody else what secret thoughts and feelings you have cherished, and what secret sins you have committed. You know what your actions have been, and what the motives of those actions have been; and you can take a general account of your life. And why not be faithful to yourselves? Is there any use of cheating yourselves? I can understand how a bad accountant might make up a false account to cheat his employers; but I cannot understand how a merchant could make up a false account to cheat himself. And will you make up your moral account so as to blind your eyes and hoodwink yourselves, and stagger on for years, and at last plunge into the other world all unprepared to meet your Judge and the judgment?

It is not enough to say, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do these things?" Ah! many and many a man has done everything that he abhorred in the beginning. Many and many a man has fallen upon every evil that he dreaded in the beginning. Many and many a man has made shipwreck of faith, though at first he started for the other thing. I beseech of you take heed. Read the lessons that are around about you. Watch men and see what their lives are. Listen to the testimony of God's word. Call God to your side, and yield yourself to his will. By prayer, and by faith, and by reliance upon the power of the Holy Ghost, live so that at whatever hour the Son of Man may come, he shall find you right and willing to depart and be with Christ, which is better than life.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We humble ourselves before thee, our Father. We draw near to thee in the spirit of children: and yet of children that have gone wrong. We are conscious of our sins. We are conscious that we have sinned against our own light and knowledge. Thou hast had occasion to be offended with us. Thou mightest long ago have been discouraged and cast us off. It is the nature of thy love to endure. Thou art long-suffering, patient, slow to anger, quick to relent. Thy nature is healing to sin, and none shall open their hearts to let in thine influence and go uncleansed. The fire of thy Spirit shall burn up the dross. The purity of thy soul shall cleanse the impurity of ours. The truth of thy thought shall straighten out the crookedness, the lies, the falsity, in us. Thou wilt pour through the soul those tides of the divine Spirit that shall cleanse it; and by thy power we shall be regenerated, ennobled, lifted up into the likeness of God. And into our souls breathe the filial spirit, so that we shall call out in every hour, in every spontaneous moment, "Our Father which art in heaven."

We thank thee for all thy bounty which there is in the fatherhood of God. Oh! what comfort we have plucked from it already! It has reached above our heads as a vine that grew by diminution; for all we have taken of thine over-arching care has but caused it to put forth new clusters. Thou art giving without diminishing the supply. Oh! what consolation have we had when we fled from the terror of thy law; when we fled from the relentless aspects of nature, and found the warmth and sympathy of thy paternal heart! Thou art good. Thou art not only good but thou art merciful. How gentle are thy ways towards us! Grant that thy goodness and thy gentleness may win us more than terror and more than necessity. Grant that our hearts, moved by honor and by duty and by love, may turn unto thee and to thy ways. May we desire thy favor more than all other things. Thou knowest the battle of every one. Thou knowest the temptation that to every one is most potent. Thou knowest where are our weaknesses and what are our infirmities. Thou dost behold the doubtful conflict. Thou hast watched over us with more true tender watching and care than ever a mother watched over a child. We need not tell thee who we are. We need not tell thee what we are.

Lord Jesus! but for thy grace, we should have perished; and by thy grace we are what we are in good. Yet continue thy good to us. Inspire us and strengthen us and lift us up as things that are mighty to the destruction of pride and selfishness and appetite and every evil way. Turn us to thyself. Be school-master to us in love. Discipline us. Instruct us. Guide us to the knowledge of all that is good; and may our inclination follow our knowledge. May we have the way of righteousness. And, we beseech of thee, be near to those who are yet too weak to walk, and to all that are cast down and cannot rise up, and to all that are taken captive by sin and cannot release themselves, and to all that are snared, and to all that are slumbering, being stupefied by sin. O thou Healer! draw near. Thou Deliverer! appear for the rescue of souls that are in peril. There are many who make feeble cry to thee, not because they deserve aught, but because it is thy heart's delight to do good, that they have faith in thee. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt help those who seek to help others. Give them wisdom. Inspire them with prudence. Give them might and power upon the hearts of their fellows. May all that seek to lead men in Godly ways be themselves lead by God. May those who seek to injure men, to carry them down, and to make mischief of happiness, be met with rebuke, and overthrown by the breath of thy mouth and the brightness of thy coming.

Oh! hasten that day when all men shall learn the lore of love. Hasten that day when thy Spirit shall be breathed into all thy churches, and through thy churches into all the community; when laws and government, shall be

founded and administered in righteousness; when all the institutions of society shall be filled with the spirit of heaven. Grant that that blessed day of prediction may come when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, when cruelty shall cease, when superstition and ignorance shall depart, and when the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters fill the sea. Oh! hasten that long-delaying day. Grant that those who labor for it and die without the sight, giving place to other generations that labor and die again without the sight, and all of us may behold it, if not upon these shores, yet in our Father's kingdom. For this world is thine own. Oh Jesus! thou hast redeemed it by thy precious blood. Thou shalt win it through the dark ages. Thou art the Traveler unknown, seeking it. Thou shalt find it. Thou shalt cleanse it. Thou shalt ordain purity and justice and truth and love. And all the world shall see thy salvation.

Make haste, then. Consummate thy promises. Fulfill the blessedness of thine intent. Bring in on this earth all thy mighty power.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit shall be praise everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of instruction which we have endeavored to give. May all those who are in the morning of life take heed to their courses. May all those upon whom thou hast placed the burden and heat of the day watch warily, knowing whose adversaries abound on every side. May those who have passed the years of their lives, and are standing in their autumn days, more than ever see that they are prepared to meet their God. May there be no more delay. May there be no more excuses. May men no more deny their duty, or turn away from their Saviour. Lift up thy cross, and make it glow before the eyes of every one. And may there be many who shall be won to it, and subdued by it, to the honor of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE A NEW LIFE.

I have selected for the theme of discourse, this evening, the passage of Scripture which I read in the opening service, and which is contained in the forepart of the third chapter of John's Gospel. It is the account of the interview of Nicodemus with our Saviour. I select it because, while it has been ten thousand times discoursed upon, and in ways most edifying, there are certain tendencies existing in our time, and developing themselves in the most interesting manner, which can be made in no way so beneficially effective, I apprehend, as by holding up the truth which was made known by our Saviour to Nicodemus in this passage.

The whole interview and the whole thought of the Saviour become very interesting when they are looked at in connection with the character of this man.

The Pharisees were not very good; but they were the best men to be found at that time. They were the most patriotic of the Jews. They were the most learned and intellectual class. They were the most religious. And it does not alter the fact of their endeavoring to do well, that they had fallen upon a wrong method, and that it was a method which exhausted itself in benefit, and then led them into positive mischief.

After the Jews had been carried to Babylon and scattered, their services were discontinued, and their law was forgotten, and intermarriages were gradually being formed; and the bad example working, little by little, little by little, it became evident to the heads of the nation that unless something were done they would perish, and the Jews that were remaining from Judea would be, as the ten tribes had been, mixed and lost among the nations of the earth. Therefore it was that a class of men sprang up among them who undertook to keep the Jews to their national faith, to keep the children in memory of their history, to stir up, by every means in their power, the remembrance of the land from which they had been exported, and to keep alive all those historic circumstances which should make them proud of their history, and proud of themselves, and, more than that, prevent their forgetting the peculiar economy under which they had been reared.

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These men undertook to bring out, and to expound, the whole Mosaic ritual. And, as times had changed, and their condition was very different from what it had been in their own land, there sprang up innumerable questions which were not provided for in the text—questions of casuistry; questions relating to adjustments of duty; a thousand nice questions. These questions were answered according to the best light of these men. And the Pharisee was the man who undertook to maintain, among the Jews, in their dispersion and captivity, the spirit of Judaism, and the spirit of the Jewish religion. And when the Jews came back again to Jerusalem, that which had been so useful abroad was still continued at home. The Pharisees, although never separated as a sect, and organized as our sects are in the Christian religion (the term *Pharisee* being rather the name of a school of thought, or of a certain class of men with peculiar tendencies), went on with this same work. They were men who undertook to live a righteous life according to the best light they could obtain from their own scriptures, together with the coördinate reasoning of all the learned men of their nation. They were extremely scrupulous, therefore, in all those points of morality which were pointed out in their Scripture. But as pride, and vanity, and self-seeking, and various other moral evils, had no special prominence in the Mosaic institutes, so they had very little notice at the hand of the Pharisee. While he was rigorously pure, according to the Mosaic law of purity; while he neglected no known duty; while he followed the way of righteousness according to the best interpretation that he had; he was yet spiritually blind; and he became proud, and vain, and hard, and unsympathetic, and unloving, rigorous for duty, and without mercy. And it was against these elements that our Master inveighed most severely. But it cannot be denied that among the Pharisees were specimens of the best natures and the best characters that were found in the Saviour's time.

So, then, if you can select from them one of the best of the Pharisees, who represents the highest estate to which the moral nature had risen among the Jews (and the Jews were preëminently higher than any other nation on the globe, morally,) and then listen to the instruction which Christ gives him, you will be able to come nearer to the ideal of your Master than in any other way. This we have in the case of Nicodemus.

He was a Pharisee; and the whole history shows that he was one of the noblest of the Pharisees; that he had a hunger of soul; that he was not satisfied with the external righteousness which he had attained. The teachings of Christ had touched a secret feeling in him, and opened a desire for something more.

He came to Christ by night—it has been supposed from cowardice

I think not. I regard Nicodemus as one of those men who are timid from excessive conscientiousness; who are not demonstrative; who are very thoughtful and quiet; who are very desirous to know what is right, and to do what is right, but who are distrustful of themselves, and therefore are mild, moderate, secluded, even. He came by night, not because he was afraid, but because it comported with that kind of inquisitive, conscientious, mild nature of his. Afterwards, circumstances showed that he was far from cowardly. When he sat in the council, and they were to condemn Christ, he spoke out before the others, and said, "Doth our law condemn any man before he be heard?" And afterwards, when, to everybody else, the whole mission of Christ seemed to have been exploded, and Christ had been crucified, and there was no friend to stand near him; when John was not there, and bold Peter had fled, and every one of the disciples that were nourished in Christ's bosom had gone—then this man it was, whom men are pleased to call "timid," and to accuse of sneaking to Christ by night to avoid responsibility—he it was, that, with Joseph of Arimathea, dared to go before the Government, and risk everything, for a cause that had failed, and gone out of sight, and demand the body of the Saviour, and give it an honorable burial. It is a shame to asperse the name of Nicodemus with the charge of moral cowardice. No, he went to Christ by night because he was a ruler, and he did not wish all the men in the body to which he belonged to be picking at him. He was not yet prepared to take a stand. He wanted a conference with Christ; he wanted instruction; he wanted to go to him when he was not thronged—when he was at leisure; he wanted few or no spectators; and he did just what you or I would have done. He went by night to the Saviour, in order to have a long communion with him.

Now John, and perhaps one or two disciples besides, were present whilst this conversation between Christ and Nicodemus was going on; and we should have expected that our Saviour would say to him, "You are on the right path; and you are among the few that I have met of the Jews who have a spiritual insight. You have moral earnestness. Go on. Develop. Bring forth to the higher form that which is already in you." But no; singling out this best one of all the men of that time, Christ, in this conference, without any preface, without any qualification, said:

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And when Nicodemus could not understand it, Christ went further, and told him that it was not the birth of the flesh, or physical birth, that he was speaking of. Said he:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

In other words, he lifted upon his mind the ideal of a character formed, not by the evolution of the natural forces, looking at nature in its lower sphere, in this material world, in this physical globe. He declared to him that the Divine conception of character is that it should come into commerce with God; that there should be an elapse of the Spirit upon the soul; that the soul, as it were, should, by that Divine influence, by that creative, penetrative power from on high, be lifted up into a realm and into experiences which do not belong to the natural man, which are never developed by the force of human society, and its educated organizations, which are never evolved by philosophy, which never come through natural agencies, but which spring from the direct power of the Spirit of God acting upon the soul of man. That is the declaration of Christ.

See how John insists on the same thought in the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the first chapter of this Gospel:

"He came unto his own [that is, to the Jews, his own nation and people], and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

It is not developing a latent power. It is not bringing out the constitutional tendency, and guiding it.

"To them *gave* he power to become the sons of God."

It is a new nature, a new dignity, a new level, a new plane, a new sphere, into which human nature is to be exalted by the power of God.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

It is becoming the son of God by the direct coming of the power from on high. Men come to it, not by *birth of blood*—that is, not by hereditary tendencies; not by *the will of man*—that is, not by the force of mind applied to their education; but by *the power of God.*

That is the ideal of character which is developed in this conversation of Christ with Nicodemus. And it is all the more fearful because Nicodemus was so good a man. He was not a miserable idolator. He was not a heretic. He was not a Sadducee—that is, a liberalist. A Sadducee was a man who did not believe under the pretense of sticking to the whole letter of the law; and in the interpretations which the Pharisee gave, he excluded pretty much all the light that had been evolved in the whole history of the Jewish people. He did not believe in immortality, nor in the resurrection of the dead. He was a man of pleasure. He was a gentleman, easy-going and refined, for his own sake, and enjoying life as best he could, keeping peace with the reigning, ruling bodies, both in things temporal and in things spiritual.

We are well acquainted with this class of people. We have ever so many of them. They preach and pray. We have churches full of them. We have saints made out of them. The Sadducees are not

dead, nor the Pharisees either. All these classes of men we have, to help us study the histories.

Now, if Nicodemus had been one of the Sadducees, our Master's exhortation would not have seemed so remarkable; but to take a Pharisee, who was rigorous in every external duty—that is, in what we should call *moralities;* to take one out of the Pharisees who was so much more honorable than the mere specialists; to take a man who was as strict as Nicodemus was, and to say to him, "You must be born again"—this was indeed surprising. Christ virtually says of the virtues of Nicodemus, that all this is not good for nothing, but is only the foregoing steps, the preparation, of that to which God's spirit would lead him. The true ideal is that to which you are to come, not by keeping the law, not by the force of your own will, not by the meliorating influence of all the social sympathies which surround you, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. That which, when your soul is inspired and lifted into the sympathy and presence of the divine Heart itself, is produced in you—that is the manhood, that is the nature, which you are to seek. For,

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Consider, in this light, the question of *moralities*—a question very much debated. Are we to teach that a man is to substitute this, if I may so say, *second nature*, which is born in him by the Holy Ghost, for ordinary morality? Oh no; no man ever can become spiritual who is immoral, or unmoral. That which is born in us by the power of the Holy Ghost presupposes the fulfillment of all natural laws. It presupposes obedience to all those things which belong to the order of society, and to the lower constitution which men are in, so far as it goes. These moralities are not only not despicable, but indispensable. They bear the same relation to the after life which the basilar leaves of a plant bear to its blossoming. We do not say, before the lily throws out its blossoming stalk, that the leaves of the lily are good for nothing; and yet, who would be put off with the blades of a lily and not with the blossom? Who would be put off with the ground leaves of a ranunculus, and not with the cluster of flowers which is the ultimate, highest form to which it can be brought by the finer forces of light and heat?

And so in human life, all the great duties which belong to the constitution of its family and of the state are prerequisites. They come along in the same operation. They do not, however, reach to that condition which we call *piety*, or to that condition which Christ would bring us to by the new birth.

What is it worth, then? Well, it is worth just what it *is* worth—no more, and no less. The Indian, in his wigwam, knows a great

many things; but he is not a civilized man. And suppose you should put this question, "What is all that I do know worth, if this is not civilization? If I am brought out of this state, am I to leave all these things, and count them as nothing?" Certainly he is not. Relative to his condition they are unspeakably important; but as compared with a higher development they are of very little value. That is to say, if he should become refined and noble in civilized life, he would look back with pity upon the condition that he was in when these were the best things he had, not because they were in and of themselves bad, but because he was so far from having attained, by growth and development, that which was possible to him.

When a man begins to write, his letters are crooked enough. His sentences run up hill and down hill at a great rate. His writing is a hideous scrawl. But then, shall we say to the child, "It is good for nothing?" No. It is good to begin with; and it is good to leave behind just as quick as he can go on unto perfection. You must creep before you can walk. You must go through the lower forms before you can come to the higher forms. Moralities belong to the lower life, and are important; but they are not to be confounded with the higher developments of life. Although they may stand in the order of time, and in the order of Divine Providence, and in the order of grace, as intimately connected with them, as pre-requisite to them, and as, in some sense, ministering to them; yet, after all, they are not the thing that the soul needs.

From the urgency with which we preach the necessity of a distinctively Christian disposition, the new life, and the new birth, men get the impression that we undervalue truth, and honor, and justice, and godliness, and fidelity. No, we do not; you *over*-value them. We believe them to be worth just as much as you do. Nay, we believe them to be worth more than you do. The only difference is, that we look at them from a point of view which you do not. We believe them to be worth teaching, and worth exhorting to, and worth believing. And I say to you, "If you can have nothing else, have them;" as I would say to men, "If you can have nothing better, have copper; if you can rise to silver, take silver; but if you can get gold, do not stop on copper, nor on silver. Take the highest." And I think you would take it.

Now, in regard to these moral matters, these lower forms of religious development, these rude elements of wisdom and goodness in life, we say, "Take them, at least. Restrain your appetites and passions. Develop kindly sympathies. Live to do good among your fellow-men. But do not think, for one single moment, that that is the sum total of manhood." It is the mere brush that grows at the

bottom of the trunk. It is not the broad tree. It is not the magnificent blossom of the magnolia. The pure, white blossom of spiritual life is high above this, in a better air, and under a stronger sun.

And yet (and it is just this point that induces me to discourse on this subject to-night) there are a great many who say, "What does all this talk about following Christ amount to? There are men who certainly are better Christians than those who are in the Church, that do not even believe in the divinity of Christ. They are upright, public-spirited men, and so most valuable citizens. Nobody contributes to all worthy enterprises so willingly as they. They are temperance men, and are active in endeavors to save from intemperance those around about them. They are seeking, by their example, to impress the community with ideas of generosity and integrity. In many respects they are self-sacrificing. And although they may not technically be followers of Christ, are they not really followers of Christ? And are we to say of them that they are not in the new life?" I say, unhesitatingly, that they are not in the new life. There are many men who seem to be only moralists, but who I admit are in the germinant state of Christianity. There are those who are familiar with the truth of Christ, and are excellent in the lower forms of morals, and of whom a great many men say, "They are followers of Christ, though they do not know it, and though they reject His name." But I say, No. They are very good men in a lower sphere, but that which is the distinctive characteristic of Christianity or of manhood as interpreted by Christ—the new conception of human nature, the new conception of human life and human development, given us by the Lord Jesus Christ—requires, not that men should do certain just things, and merciful things, and pure things, but that they should have raised themselves above the animal condition of life, and come, by the touch of God's creative spirit, into the supersensuous state, prepared to rise out of this natural sphere into the sphere above, and become members of the great assembly, where are spirits of just men made perfect. And while I do not rail at these lower elements, I say, So many Christian churches, so many professors of religion, are sordid; so many profess to be Christians, and so few give evidence of it, that I am not surprised that there should be constitutionally just and upright men who put them all to shame.

Now, I do not regard a man as a Christian simply because he is in the Church. Neither do I regard a man as a Christian simply because he is just and upright. A man may be better than members of the Church, and yet not be a Christian. That is not the point of comparison. We cannot afford, unfortunately, to make Church membership the standard of Christianity. We are to measure all men by

nothing else than the ideal of Christ himself; viz., *that faith which works by love.* It is by that opening development, that newly created element, in the human soul, by which it takes hold of the great invisible realm of God, and the master truths of that invisible realm; it is by the power of all-pervading love in the human soul, that men are to be saved. And nothing could be worse for this world than to lower the conception of what Christianity requires.

In the first presentation of this view, it seems as though it were illiberal. It seems, for instance, as if those men who are honest and good ought to be reckoned as Christians. It seems as though those who do not call them Christians were illiberal. It seems, on the other hand, as though a man who maintains the integrity of a higher ideal, and holds men to it, were an illiberal man. But it is not so.

Here are two teachers. One of them is thought to be liberal. He lets the boys do about as they please. They nuzzle in the mud. They run to all manner of license and self-indulgence. And he flatters them. In that way he works them along as best he can. And on the whole they are pretty good boys. But he turns them out into life uneducated, undrilled, unself-denying, and without the power of self-restraint. And he is called a good man. He is *goody*, but not good.

The other man knows what life means; he knows what manhood requires; and he holds his school strictly and sternly to the line of duty. He will not permit delinquency. He scourges and drives up, by every stimulus possible, his boys to higher honor, to greater industry, to nobler aspirations, to larger and larger acquisitions.

The so-called liberal man is the man who permits men to run riot, and waste their powers, and under-build, and under-plan, and under-act, and under-live. Is that liberalism? It is liberalism down-hill. They are the truest liberals who lift the ideal of character, the standard of ambition, higher and higher, and hold men to it.

When, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ says that moralities are not sufficient (for that is substantially his declaration to Nicodemus); when he says that the ideal character is one that is born of God, and that it is by the power of the Divine Spirit that we are to come to it, and that we cannot come to it by any other instrumentality, he is the truest friend of man. And among men, he is the most generous and kind who maintains that ideal, and shows his fellow-men, not that the things which belong to the body are worthless, but that true manhood is far higher than the body can reach, and far higher than the ordinary reason can reach—so high that it can only be reached by the power of God in the soul.

"To them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

I shall not undertake to answer the question which we hear propounded, and which branches off to an entirely different subject; viz., what becomes of those who reach so high on the plane of morality, but do not touch the yet higher plane of spirituality? You might just as well ask me what becomes of a marksman who almost hits the mark, but does not hit it. You might just as well ask me what becomes of an anchor that is let out of a ship, and reaches almost to the bottom, but stops short without touching it. You might as well ask me what becomes of a portrait which is splendidly painted, and is almost like the man that it is designed to represent, and yet is not like him. You might as well ask me what becomes of medical treatment that comes very near curing a man, and yet lets him die. The question as to what becomes of these developments of morality I leave to the future, and I leave to the Master. "Eye hath not seen." I know not. But one thing I know, that whatever may become of those who have had but little chance; whatever may become of those who have not been instructed, there scarcely can be room for doubt as to what will become of those who have had an open eye directed to the clearest truth, who have had it urged upon them again and again, who have been convicted by it, and whose souls have been stimulated and electrified by the power of this truth as it is in Jesus Christ. When men, under such circumstances, deliberately put the truth aside, and crucify, so far as in them lies, the Lord of Glory afresh, and tread under foot the blood of atonement, and call it an unholy thing, it can scarcely be doubted what will become of them. If we are to accept the revelation of Scripture at all, we must take this part of it.

That there are many persons who have this new life in the very lowest form, I do firmly believe; and that all who have the germ principle of it in them will be saved, I verily believe. It is not that we have developed very much, it is that we have a point of development established in us, that determines our safety and salvability. It is that the Spirit of God has gained a lodgment in the soul, that the leaven is there, that the root is thrown down and the germ is pointed up, that gives us ground for hope. That being secured, there is an infinite space of time for men to develop in.

But of those who are without the germ-form, of those upon whose view there is no light of the word of God thrown, and who have no hope, there is not much that we can say. What are we, that we should speak with authority where God himself is silent, and where the all-merciful Saviour is silent, or speaks only in words of warning, and of solemn dissuasion?

And so let me say to you, that, whatever may seem to be the plausibleness of modern reasonings, in respect to character, whatever

may seem to be the real excellence of the lower sphere of human attainments, no man shall see the Lord except he be a participator of His holiness. No man is in the kingdom of God unless he has developed all those higher spiritual forces, and come into this ideal state of manhood, by the regenerating power of God.

This is the truth that I have for you to-night. Men may be very good men in their way, and do many things that are amiable and exalted, and yet,

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Children of Christian parents, to you is my appeal to-night. Men and brethren, I am not here the advocate of a sect; I am not here calling for volunteers; I am not here to build up a party; I am simply a man standing among men to speak to you of those truths of my Master and your Master which bid you hope for a nobler manhood than it is given to nature to unvail or to conceive of. You are not forever necessitated to move in the body, nor with the animals that dwell upon the earth. Neither are the lower faculties your only inheritance. They were given you for a purpose; you are permitted to use them; but there is the new and living way of Jesus Christ by which you may go, step by step, higher, to a sphere where you will be removed from these material laws, in the presence of God.

To you I bring this higher life, this nobler education, this privilege and prerogative, the sonship of God. Will you accept it, and become sons of God?

Ah! blessed are the crowned with invisible crowns, whose hands may toil with poverty, but whose souls handle the eternal riches of God. Blessed are they who droop in earthly sorrow, and mourn: they shall be comforted; for all the heaven drops down compassion and mercy for them. Blessed are they who suffer here that they may reign there. Blessed are they who, when Christ comes to them, know their Master, and accept from him that power by which they become sons of God, and heirs, joint heirs, with Christ to an eternal inheritance.

May this wisdom be yours; and may you have the fruition of this spiritual life, and this immortality, and this glory, through Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Heavenly Father, encouraged by the memory of all thy past goodness to us. Thou hast taken away the terror from our thought of thee. We no longer behold thee as interpreted by fear, nor through lurid guilt. We no longer behold thee sitting in judgment, terrible, full of all threat, administering the law and its condign penalty. Thou art the Helpful One to us. Thy heart beats for us and for all. And from thy brow is cleared all scowling threat. And thine eyes are full of compassion. And thy lips speak mercy and love. And thy pierced hands are spread—hands that bear empire, and draw men to thee, that they may become thine; that they may enter into a secret life; that they may be translated from the power of the flesh into the realm of the spirit, and live as unto God. And we rejoice that thou hast made so many witnesses of this thy power. For thou hast begun in them this life, which, although it languishes, and is obstructed, is not destroyed. As our days in summer are overhung with clouds, so thy face, by tempests of our troublous passions, is obscured. Yet, the day is begun, and the light is shining, and shall ere long triumph over every difficulty and every hindrance, shining clear to the end. We rejoice that thou hast granted unto us no mean measure; that we are set forth to become the sons of God; that we are not to live, as do the beasts, for the pleasure of the hour, for sense and then perish; that it is ours to be translated into thy kingdom, to be enrolled, when this flesh shall fall and rise to immortality and glory.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may foresee the blessedness of this estate; that we may by faith apprehend thee clearly, and eagerly embrace it, and be satisfied with nothing less than this. And whatever perishes, let not our crown perish. And whatever we may fear in this world, let us not fear exclusion, in the world to come, from thy presence. We pray that thou wilt deal with us with rigor, if it be needful. In love chastise us, that we may follow our Father's hand, and know that he will not permit us to err unto our own destruction.

We pray that thou wilt grant that many may be aroused to a sense of their necessities. May they behold the uselessness of their self-indulgent lives. May they turn away from the vanity of the world, and from the lusts of the flesh. May they seek the things that are pure, and true, and just, and noble. May they rise above the thoughts and feelings of these earthly days and nations, and enter into the republic above, and have such a commerce with thee and with the spirits of just men made perfect, that they shall be already in fellowship, where soon they shall be in full citizenship.

Grant, we pray thee, that thy kingdom may be advanced everywhere. May thy servants who preach righteousness be armed by the Lord, and not be daunted nor turned back.

And now, with so many insidious errors coming in—now, that so many things would blur and hide the light of true piety, grant that there may be faithful witnesses found, and that they may bear such testimony that the Lord shall yet be made known and honored everywhere.

We pray for the elevation of the nations of the earth; for the spirit of civilization and of knowledge, and of liberality; for the cessation of war. We pray for the fellowship of nations; for peace and amity; for helpfulness and not hindrance. We pray that all forms of evil may cease. And grant that thy kingdom may come, and thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We ask it in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Heavenly Father, that the word of truth spoken may sink into good and honest hearts, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. May we not be seduced, by men's reasonings, from the simplicity of thy word. May we hear the voice of Christ speaking of our noble manhood, and not the voice of men flattering each other. May we be discontented with ourselves. May we evermore have that glorious discontent which shall lift us, not in mutterings and repinings, but in aspirations and yearnings for things noble and pure in thy higher sphere. We pray that thou wilt open the eyes of those who are blind, and unstop the ears of those who are deaf, and soften the hearts of those who are hard-hearted. Grant that there may be many that shall hear in truth thy word, and receive, and have wrought in them that which comes from the working power of God. Which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CONCEIT.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."—PROV. XXVI., 12.

There is very little hope of a fool, and if a man who is conceited is worse off than that, he is badly off indeed.

The opinion of Solomon is not shared by men very generally. Conceit is very much in repute, and very widely prevalent; and people who are conceited by no means think that they are fools. They think that Solomon was one.

What is this conceit? Men are thought to be conceited who are positive: but that is by no means what is meant by conceit. A man of an intense nature, and a clear-cut understanding, sees precisely, when he sees at all, and he *knows* what he knows, and seems, oftentimes, to be opinionated and conceited. He may be opinionated, but that is not necessarily being conceited. Nor are we to suppose that every man who is over-confident is conceited. That may spring from hopefulness. A man's buoyant temperament, a man's sanguine disposition, leads him oftentimes into conceit, and, as a general thing, there is very little in his experience to correct it. There are some men who, if you throw them down and leave them, get up again. They are like an india-rubber ball, which, no matter how much you compress it, resumes the same shape and elasticity still. There are some men who, no matter what happens to them, retain their original characteristics. And ordinarily an over-sanguine man, who is hopeful to his damage, remains so; and his life is a series of ups and downs, of successes and disasters, closely connected.

If it were not for these men, society would be very apt to stand still. They are pioneers. They go before. And their disasters and successes are so many lessons to those who come after them. The bankruptcy and failure of sanguine men has, in thousands of instances, pointed out to successors the right way to go. As in a narrow channel, one ship, going before, and running aground, becomes a warning to other ships that run into the same channel; so many men, going before in life, and making mistakes, become warnings to those who follow behind them.

SUNDAY EVENING, April 10, 1870. LESSON: PROV. XXII., 1–6. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection.) Nos. 1287, 1290, 1267.

Again, there are persons who have the appearance of being conceited, on account of simple courage and an energetic temperament. They affirm and they feel with an immense deal more pressure of blood to the square inch, if I may so say, than their fellows do; and it gives them something of a towering and dictatorial way, and men say that they are conceited.

A man is conceited who has an opinion of himself, of his abilities, and of his deeds, which is quite disproportionate to any fair measurement or judgment of him. There are a great many conceited persons who are the subjects of much wit and *badinage* behind their back, and who are very harmlessly conceited. There are a great many persons who have an overweening estimate of themselves. Everything in the world is thought of by them in relation to themselves. You may start any subject you please; and in less than a minute they will get off from that subject and commence talking about themselves. All creation runs to a center; and they are the center. They love to talk about themselves, and they love to hear other people talk about them. The one thermometric test of everything, is, *how it affects hem.* And you will frequently see such persons, in all their intercourse with their fellow-men, have an innocent, a sometimes unconscious, and a sometimes conscious conceit. They move about, and people, smiling, look after them, and say all manner of uncomplimentary things of them, sometimes bitterly, and sometimes amiably.

Although this conceit is really a great weakness, yet it is not that kind of damaging conceit which Scripture speaks of, and of which I shall speak to-night.

It is a great weakness for a man to have this constitutional vanity, this overweening, intense estimate of himself; but still, if he conforms to the great laws of life, if he conforms to the great moral and intellectual laws of his being, he will go successfully and safely on through life, although with some abatement to dignity, and some abatement to reputation. For, when everybody sees that a man is taking care of his own reputation, and of himself, there is no sympathy with him. Men let him take care of his reputation and of himself, and do not help him to do it, under such circumstances.

The first form of conceit of which I shall speak, and which comes under the condemnatory passage I have read, is that which usually breaks out at the point of transition, where the young are just passing from subordination in youth to self-government in manhood. This mischievous conceit is that which leads men to set aside established formulæ, to override experience, and substantially to be skeptical of the great laws of cause and effect as they stand related to moral and intellectual development in life. In many a

generous nature—indeed, perhaps, in most—the transition from subordination and family discipline to independency, is made through a period of conceit, in which the young man and maiden no longer tolerate government. It irks them to be reproved or commanded. They will not have advice. They grow sulky and ugly, and are a torment to themselves and everybody that loves them. They know more—they are sure they do—than the other folks that live in the house. They know more than their father and their mother do. They admit that the old folks did very well for old times; but then they live in new times, and, being young folks, they catch the rising spirit of the coming day; and they do not think it fair that they should be held to conformity to the old ways. And so very excellent young men continue to make themselves intolerable for a short period. It seems as though young people have to go through this period, just as children have to go through chicken-pox, and measles, and rash, and all other little diseases of that kind which break out once, and then are over with.

If this matter stops early, if a change takes place with some of the first experiences of practical life, it is well. If not, the beginnings of the end are frequently found. At just this point there are many who make fatal steps, and begin with a downfall from which they never recover themselves. In innumerable persons this rash of conceit breaks out at the very threshold of their manhood. But in many natures it is very much like the prancing and frisking of an untamed colt; and the harness and the road are the cure. There has been many a young man who was intolerably conceited until he was put soundly to work, and responsibilities were laid upon him, and cares began to be a part of his daily food. Then he began to feel that other men did know more than he, that there is some use in counsel, and that to have some one wiser and stronger to lean upon is indeed a great blessing and a great mercy. Now this temporary conceit of youth is comparatively a weakness, rather than a sin and a crime, as other forms of conceit are.

Another class of conceited persons are those who find themselves constrained in their country life, and feel that they have not room in which to develop all the talents which God has committed to their charge. There are a great many youth in the country, well bred at home, who would grow up to be respectable men—farmers, mechanics, or professional men—in their own region round about, but who feel the spirit of a hundred men in them, and think that the country is not large enough, and that they must emigrate to the city. The city is the place for a man to find his fortune, they think.

Far be it from me to say that every man is bound to vegetate

where the seed sprouted, and that no man may go from the country to the city, or from the city to the country. I would not be understood as saying that there shall be no circulation. I merely animadvert upon those who have this contumescent feeling that there is not room enough in the country for them to display the treasure of their talents in. They come down to the city, thousands and thousands more than the city wants. It is a pitiful thing to see the enormous pressure there is at every open door of ordinary pursuits, and the overcrowded state of the city. It would promote the morals of the nation if the city were to vomit out one-third of its young population. They are not wanted. They trample each other down in the dust in their competitions. During not more than one-third of the year can half the force be employed. During the rest of the time, Heaven knows how they get a living. Not always reputably nor honestly—certainly not in a manly spirit. And yet, more are perpetually coming from the country to the city.

If a man be tough, if a man have two men's force, he may go from the country into the city and do well; but of all places on earth for dependent men, for men of a weak nerve, for men that are not elastic and enduring, the city is the worst. It grinds up weak men as the mill grinds wheat. It is the last place that they should go to. But hither they come in countless multitudes, having the impression that in the city fortunes go around begging persons to take them; that in the city treasures hang like grapes in a vineyard over a trellis, and may be had by stretching out the hand. They come to the city feeling that nimbleness and smartness will certainly win here. How many, many there are, who come down annually to fall into the pit! The most mournful thing in city life is the continuous destruction of young men and maidens. Because it is so hidden from our eyes, because it is so gradual, that we do not perceive the stages of it, we are shocked. But if a single case should be selected, and we should see, as in a dream, the enactment which takes place, first from virtue to weakness and vice, and then on to wickedness and crime, that one instance would fill us with horror. And there are hundreds and thousands of instances which we think nothing about, simply because they are so much hidden. We know that they are taking place; we know that multitudes, green and callow, come to the cities, and in the remorseless maw of vice and crime are consumed. As the larger fishes eat up and destroy the smaller ones, so this great whale-city ingurgitates and digests multitudes and multitudes of the young men that were brought hither by conceit; by an overweening self-confidence; by an impression that they had the capacity, the power, to succeed; by an inordinate sense of their importance, and of their faculty and skill for

getting along in the world. And borne hither by this conceit, they are destroyed ere long, and their fragments are spewed out; and that is all that there is of their life.

Then there are those who perish by conceit because they assume that they can succeed in life on the principle of good luck, instead of by a recognition of and obedience to the great law of equivalents. The law of God in this world, is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" and the apostle declares that "God is not mocked." Conceit declares that God *can* be mocked. And there are ten thousand young men in this city to-day, and in the great city adjoining, who are just as sure as can be that they are going to cheat Providence. Others fail, to be sure; but then, they were not as smart as these are. They did not know as much! They were not as cunning nor shrewd, nor deft, nor lucky! There are multitudes who believe that they can sow idleness, and reap abundance; that they can sow carelessness, and have the products of care; that they can sow self-indulgence, and get that which only comes from frugality and economy, and enterprise, and industry, the longest continued. There are multitudes of men who believe that they can squander their passions, double-handed, and throw away their life, and yet gather all, and garner all. There are multitudes of persons who come down to the city, feeling, not that they are going to make their fortune by the closest attention to business. Oh no! That is no part of their intent. They mean to do just as little as they can. They mean to elude detection just as long as they can. They believe that they can live a double life. They believe that they can live a life, capacious and deep, of licence and licentiousness, covered with a sort of cream of higher qualities. In that lower life their blood is to circulate. There all their nerves are to be played upon with infinite joys, varying from day to day, and above that they are going to have a little bit of a life of respectability and morality. They are going to show their employers, and other people, that they can live in the indulgence of their lower faculties and sensuous nature, while they keep up a better life on the surface. There are thousands of men who live for the gratification of their selfishness, their lusts and appetites, their animalism, and are conceited enough to believe that they are going to succeed in life in the wicked game that they are playing. They think they can succeed by cheating their employers, cheating the world, and cheating God. They think they can succeed though they turn their days into pleasure, and their nights into dissipation. They are going to do as little as they can; and that little they are going to do to their own advantage; and by their deftness they are going to set at naught the canons of strict honesty and honor, and are going to be glittering, and brilliant, and happy. They are not

going to read nor to study much. They are somehow going to be wise through their smartness. They are going to succeed in life by their wits. More than that, they are going to do just what their heart wants to do, and just what their flesh wants to do. And they think they are going to dodge all the nets and snares which are set to harm and destroy them. They think that somehow or other they are going to maintain the reputation of being virtuous and honorable men, at the same time that they are practicing dishonorable and unvirtuous habits. God says to them, "Thou fool!"

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

I see shops crowded with just such young men; I see stores crowded with them; I see offices crowded with them—young men who are trying by ignominious ways to maintain themselves. They believe that they will be able to cheat God, and that what they sow they shall not reap. They are going to sow chaff and reap wheat, in their judgment.

It is the want of manliness, it is the want of moral stamina, it is the want of a wise discrimination on the part of young men, that makes the name *clerk* so often a name of contempt. The business is right: it is the miserable conceit of the shallow-pated, and the unlearned, and the unvirtuous, that makes it disreputable.

I would that men could learn to believe a few things which all history has been busy establishing. Industry is the beginning of prosperity. Frugality is the handmaid of industry. Temperance and self-restraint are the indispensable concomitants of prosperity. He that means to prosper must pay for whatever he gets. I do not mean in money. There is another counter over which men take their goods. If a man is to have learning, he must give an equivalent of study for it. If a man is to have an experience, he must give an equivalent of application for it. If a man is going to have a character, he has got to earn or pay for that character. And no man will ever prosper in this world by luck, unless it be by the luck of getting up early, and working hard, and maintaining honor and integrity. Prosperity gained in any other way will be a delusion and a snare to every young man.

Conceit carries men far beyond these bounds which I have marked out. Although the testimony of experience is that no man can carry a coal in his bosom and not be burned, or touch pitch and not be defiled, there are multitudes (and every year the ranks are filled up as they drop off) who are conceited, and believe that they are a match for knaves and knavery; that they are a match for seduction and seducers. Multitudes tread along the path where there are skeletons innumerable of men who have been destroyed, and yet they do not believe that they are going to be destroyed. Many young men, going to the

door of the lazar-house, have seen heaped up there corpses of men that have been destroyed; and yet, vainly confident of their own safety, they have gone in, to perish likewise. If men would take warning from that which meets them at the doors of gambling saloons, and the myriad other places where thousands upon thousands are swallowed up and destroyed, instead of listening to the voice of their conceit, what multitudes would be saved who are now lost! But they are bound to try their luck. "What is the harm of an innocent game of cards?" say young men to us. No harm in and of itself; but there is harm in the associations which surround it; in the society into which it draws one; and in the desire which it excites in men for unjust and unlawful gains. For every man is a gambler who seeks to get money without giving a fair equivalent for it, whether he be gambling for stocks or anything else. And yet men think they can avoid being affected by these associations, and this society, and these provocations. Though others fail, they think they will not fail. But how many that think so do fail!

I know a man in this town who was worth seventy or eighty thousand dollars, which he had acquired by sound industry; but eighty thousand dollars was just enough to kindle in him an insatiable desire for wealth. The spirit of avarice took possession of him, and he must needs go into "the street." He entered upon a course for which he had not been trained; and when he came out, instead of having increased his eighty thousand to five hundred thousand, as he meant to do, he had lost it all, and was penniless. And then, to cover his disgrace he became a drunkard. Conceit took him in, and disaster kicked him out.

How many young men there are who, though old heads warn them, and though there are thousands that have been destroyed in the same path that they are about to enter, as they might see if they would open their eyes, yet press forward, and say, "Oh! a faint heart never won a fair lady. Nothing venture, nothing have. I will try." The feeling is just this: "Ten thousand men fail because they are not as smart as I. Now look, and see me go into the street and make money." And men do look and see them go into the street; and they see them come out of the street again crest-fallen, plucked, drooping, dishonored, discouraged, all because they made fools of themselves at the beginning, by being too conceited. They are double fools, because they not only were conceited at the beginning, but are disappointed and crushed at the end.

Not only do men gamble, but they resort to gambling houses through curiosity. There is not a young man who has not heard about the dangers of these places. All young men have heard their

parents and their neighbors talk about, and have read about in the newspapers, and known about personally, cases of young men who have gone from the country to the city, and lost their money by mock auctions, and thimble-riggers, and other swindling operations; and yet multitudes of these same young men go down to the city, and in their conceit, think they can go in the midst of things, gratify their curiosity, and escape—and are caught like so many gudgeons. They are caught and plucked, in their greenness, because they are so conceited. Men go into gambling saloons, knowing all about them, knowing well that they are traps and delusions. They know that an old trained gambler is a match for five hundred unsophisticated young men; and yet they pit themselves against him. With all his experience, with all his craft, with all his secret arrangements, with all his organized knavery, you would say that it was impossible for anybody to make head against him. A man may have some chance in a game of chance, but in gambling saloons chances are not allowed. A man who gambles for a living is nothing but an incarnate thief, a cunning thief, a perpetual thief—first, last and all the time a thief. And his business is to steal. He has made stealing a profession, and is practiced in it. He is acquainted with men's dispositions, and knows how to take them. And here comes in one of these green young men. He is exactly like a little fly exploring a big black-bellied spider's web, that says, "It does not look as though there was very much to be afraid of here; I do not see anything that I cannot manage; at any rate, I will try," and pitches in. And after he is once in, you hear one faint buzz, and that is the end of him!

There are thousands of conceited young men who come down to the city, oh! so shrewd; oh! so smart; oh! so confident of their ability to go into danger and come out without being harmed. They are eager to measure themselves with the men who go to these places. They go to the theater, and nudge their companions, and say, "What would the old man think if he saw me here? What would Aunt Sal say? Would not they think it strange?" And so they jeer and laugh. And when they come out of the theater they think they would like to have company, so they go home with company. They are so smart that they think they are not in danger! There is nobody else that is so keen as they are! They feel secure. And they go into the house of death. And there they are wrought upon by drugged wines and drugged courtesies; and the dart strikes through their liver. They were so wise that they thought they could meddle with pitch and not be defiled.

"The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell."

The house of the strange woman is a deep pit, and multitudes of these conceited young men fall into it. They think they can be wicked with impunity, and they venture, and are slain. It is a house of darkness, it is a house of perpetual death, and thousands upon thousands, in long, groaning processions, go in.

Oh! that when men come to the front door, some angel would take them to the back door, and let them see those come out who went in blossoming in the beauty of early manhood. Oh! that men could see the certain end of these ways from the beginning. Oh! that they could see the ghastly skeletons, the pallid cheeks, the leaden eyes, the rotting bones, the consuming marrow, the hideous outcome of such a life! But ten thousand men perish because they deem themselves so smart; because they are confident that, however many may have perished, they are not going to perish.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

There are a great many of these conceited men listening to this sermon to-night. There are a great many that ought to listen to it. It is high time that you heard some one speak on these subjects. Your friends at home do not know what you are doing; and your friends in the city are encouraging you to go in wrong ways; and there is no faithful voice to tell you the truth to your face, and say, "Thou art the man!" I say to many that are here to-night, You have begun the career of a fool. You are attempting to play double. You are attempting to live an unvirtuous life and reap all the safety of a virtuous life. You are attempting to counteract those great laws of God, those great moral laws, which are as absolute and real as the law of gravitation and the laws of light and heat, and yet reap the blessings which can only come from obedience to those laws. You have begun to live in ways which, if you continue in them, will lead you to death; for they are ways the ends of which are death. And I beseech of you to stop while there is time to stop.

When a man has, every day, the testimony of his conscience that he has done as well as he knew, that he has avoided all known evil, and clung to that which he knew to be right, he is safe; but if a man deviates, and goes into courses that are wrong, he has to be on his guard all the time, he never knows when he is safe, he has committed himself entirely to luck and chance.

I have seen just such things as these. I have been here, now, over twenty years, and I have seen four or five generations of young men ruined. It only takes from about four to seven years to ruin a man. This is about the gradation. A young man comes down to the city, from a very good family, and from a village Sunday-school. He is an

amiable, gentle, sweet-faced, kind-hearted, well-meaning young man. That is the first picture or vision that we have.

The next vision that we have is, that the old home-made cloth is gone; that the plain, clumsy roundabout is exchanged for the nice, trig coat. And now he wears a flashing, flaming pin, and all manner of ornaments. His salary is small, but then, he must *dress*. He is a perfect Adonis. You can see by the last touches which he has put on, that he thinks himself to be a pink of perfection, and that he has made the most of himself, and the most of his time. And people say of him, "He has blossomed out."

The third vision that we have, is, a certain flush across the cheek; a certain audacious look; a fire in the eye; an intense manner; a something that suggests a man of pleasure. He is now a man that knows his "p's and q's." He knows what life is. He knows how things go in this world. He is the subject of much praise, and fools look up and envy him.

The scene shifts once more. The fourth vision which we have, is, that the man begins to find the world going against him. He has not been so fortunate latterly as he was formerly, and everybody begins to talk about him. People, now that he is going down, instead of praising him as they did when he was prosperous, turn against him, and say, "When such a man goes down, he never goes up again." The difference between a good man and a bad man, is, that when a good man falls he shall rise again from his very health and elasticity; but when a bad man falls, he is like a rotten apple, that, falling, smashes all to pieces, and cannot be put together again. A man runs through this career: first the period of blooming youth; then the period of fast degradation; then the indulgent period, and then the fourth period—that of decadence, when he begins to feel that he is sliding down. He was the confidential clerk of his employer; but he has been put down, down, and he has taken more and more to dissipation.

Then comes the fifth period. The man has the delirium tremens. And soon he comes to the end of his career. He dies a miserable wreck. He reaps the fruit of that which he has sown.

This is going on right before men's eyes; and yet, they are conceited; and they go straight on in the steps of those who have perished, and do the same things, and know it, and say, "They were not shrewd enough to avoid the dangers of the way, but I, being wiser than they, will escape harm. They were slain, but I shall not be slain."

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

Nowhere else is this more marked than in the security which

men fancy they can work out while in the participation of intoxicating drinks. There is no other phenomenon more striking than the enormous waste of life through intemperance, and the inconceivable conceit of men in regard to drinking. A young man can scarcely be persuaded that any of the evils which come from the use of intoxicating drinks will fall upon him. A young man begins with the wine-cup in social parties; and he will drink, not because he loves wine (it is the testimony of all who drink that in the beginning they never drink because they like spirituous liquors), but always for some other reason; and he soon acquires a taste for it; and that taste grows; and at length it becomes his master; and finally it ruins him, both body and soul—both for this world and for the world to come.

This spectral drama passes right before the eyes of young men, many, and many and many a time; and yet, they will step into the ranks, they will take the same cup, they will enter upon the same career, they will make the same excuses, they will fall into the same presumption, and they will come to the same end. And others will be found springing up to take their places. And these will follow in the same path, and contract the same habits, and make the same plea, and come to the same death. And still others will take their places, and go right through the same career.

So it goes on, not in fives and tens, but literally in hundreds and thousands; and you cannot persuade men that they run a risk in drinking. They will reason about other people's drinking, and point out the fallacy of other people's conceptions, and show where other people were too venturesome, and exhort other people to moderation; and yet they will not believe that there can be any danger in their case.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

Men think that intoxicating drinks will do them no harm. They know that such drinks are not necessary for any man in health; they know that in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases in a thousand they are more likely to do harm than good to men in health; they know that where the use of them is beneficial it is an extreme case; and yet they will invariably say, "It will do me no harm. I would caution men not to touch it, but it will not hurt me." More than that, they will say, "The dangers that others have fallen into can, by a discreet and right order of things, be prevented. Just as soon as I see that it is doing me any harm I can stop it." But they do not know what they are saying when they make this assertion. I have heard men talk about leaving off bad habits. I have heard men, for instance, say that they could stop the use of tobacco—and they could till they tried it! I have

known men to try it, and, after a wretched abstinence of one, two, three, four, or five days, begin to chew again. And when I said, "Why did not you stop?" they replied, "Well, I could have stopped, but I thought I would not!" I have known cases of persons who, in order to lay aside chewing, commenced smoking—which is not supposed to be so bad; and the result was that they smoked and chewed both. And sometimes men have undertaken to leave the cigar and the quid, and wind off with snuffing, and have ended with snuffing and chewing and smoking, all three. Again, and again, and again, such men will say, "If it were necessary I could leave it off;" but when they acknowledge the necessity of leaving it off, and try, they always fail.

And that which is true of narcotic stimulants of this kind, is still more signally true of drink. When we take into consideration the fact that by drink the muscular structure is changed, and a state of things is introduced into the constitution which men have no knowledge of, and which does not leave the question to their own will whether they shall or shall not, we can understand how it is that so many fail who earnestly desire and try to abstain from indulgence in intoxicating drink. Now and then there is a strong man who is able, by the exertion of his will, to lay it aside; but those who have not the stamina which he has, are unable to do it. The majority of men have not this power; and yet, every man assures you that he has it, and that intoxicating drink acts on him in such a way that he can stop drinking whenever he pleases to. But let no one delude himself with any such idea. There may be in you a hereditary taint, that answers to powder, which, if a spark falls upon it, will instantly explode. If you keep powder from fire, it will not do any harm; and if you keep away from temptation to drink you will be safe; but if you go where you are tempted, you are in imminent danger. Many a man carries in him an organic, hereditary propensity to drink. If this propensity can be shielded from certain excitements, he will go all his life long sound and wholesome; but if it is brought into certain conditions of pressure, it will develop into an insanity for drink, into intoxication, into drunkenness. And no man who takes the cup, and begins to drink, needlessly, rashly, foolishly, can tell what sleeping devil is in him that will be awakened by this bad practice. And to say that you can stop when tens of thousands have tried it and failed, is to prove yourselves conceited.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

But in another respect men are conceited. Passing from the conceit which leads men into vices and crimes, let us look at conceit in those aspects which relate to a man's conscience, faith, hope, devo-

tion. Men are conceited in regard to religious truth, and in regard to their interest in religious things. There are a great many who are believers in the Word of God, and in the essential truths which have been evoked from that word. There are a great many who go wrong, yet never lose their faith in the Scriptures; but there are multitudes of persons who have, through conceit, abandoned all faith, so that they believe in nothing. I know nothing that is more unhappy, nothing that is more fatal, nothing that is more unmanly, than the want of faith. I do not blame a man who, having been educated in one school, adopts the views of truth which are held by another school. If a man, having been born a Protestant, goes into the Catholic Church, under the conviction that that Church is right, though I do not go with him, I can understand how he can make the change, and be sincere and manly. He substitutes one set of affections for another. The main thing is that a man shall believe something which will govern his life. I can understand how a man reared in orthodox views can take on the later liberal views. I can understand how a man educated in liberal views can take on more stringent and orthodox views. It is merely changing one set of affections for another. That which I reprobate is, the sliding of men out from under all religious convictions, and their letting go everything, and for reasons so unworthy, being founded neither upon manhood, nor investigation, nor knowledge, but upon simple conceit.

How many young men do I hear say, "I do not believe a word of all the doctrines, and I do not believe the Book itself!" Did they ever read one single treatise on these doctrines? Did they ever spend an hour in a critical examination of the Bible? They know nothing about the doctrines, and they are ignorant of the contents of the Bible. They are ignorant of all the reasons which have been given for believing the Bible; and above all, they are ignorant of that which is in the Bible. They are ignorant of the essential spirit, the nature and the reality of those truths which are imperfectly embodied there. For the truths of the Bible must be experimentally learned. The teachings of the Bible are not clearly defined. The Bible is not like a philosophy or a poem, which is fully wrought out. It is to be tested just as a cook's recipe is, by *trying* it, and not simply by reading it. The Word of God is a book on which men are to build a complete life. If you build in such and such ways, you will come to happiness here and hereafter; but if you build in such and such other ways, you will come to misrule here, and destruction hereafter. A man can put the Bible to proof, not by argument, but by life. You can see what there is in truth, in purity, in love, in justice, in generosity, in magnanimity, by practising them, and not by reasoning upon them. And

yet, how many young men set the Bible aside without proving it—without putting it to trial! How many form their opinion of the Bible, or of sacred things, upon the argument, in a third or fourth rate newspaper, of an ignorant, shallow-pated scribbler! How many men cut loose from their early faith upon no other ground than that of compliance with the notions which prevail in the circle among whom they move! They talk conceitedly about ministers, and about churches; they criticise Christian people; they laugh to scorn their companions who read the Bible and endeavor to live by its precepts; they set themselves up as superior to all these things, and sometimes they go so far as to mispronounce the names of great authors, and talk about systems of philosophy, and the modern tendencies of religious ideas; and they go through life giving their encouragement to every element that makes a man contemptible, and putting obstacles in the way of every element that makes a man respectable.

There never was a Bible made, there never was a superstition started, that it was not better to believe than to believe nothing. To not believe emasculates a man, and leaves him in a condition in which he is liable to degenerate into all the vices which afflict men. There is nothing that makes a man more mushy, more feeble and worthless, than the not believing anything. That state of mind in which men are floating, in which they do not even speculate; that state of conceit and skepticism and indifference which is so prevalent, is the cause of the destruction of hundreds and thousands of young men.

And, lastly, as the grand climax of life, how conceited must that man be, who, having a price put into his hand to get wisdom; born into a world lighted by so fair a sun, hallowed by scenes that are themselves the creatures of law and the teachers of law; thrown into a society which is organized to make proof of certain great moral truths; living in the midst of influences which are perpetually showing the royalty of the things revealed in Scripture; and with the testimony of holy men innumerable of a faith which points to the other life, and saying, "As a man sows here, so shall he reap there"—how conceited must that man be, who, growing up under all these benefactions of God, can reconcile himself to rising up in the last day, in the presence of his Judge, and saying, "Here, Lord, is the talent which thou gavest me. I knew that thou wert a hard master, reaping where thou hadst not sown; and I have buried my talent in a napkin. Here is that which is thine own!" And how many men there will be that will take all the experience, and instruction, and accumulated wisdom of this life, and despise it in conceit, and make this adventure, risking everything, and rising in the last great day, with the one, or two,

or more talents that God gave them, degenerated, pierced, corrupted, destroyed! Oh! if men could in that last day, say, "Here is that thou gavest me, as thou gavest it to me; oh! if they could carry back the child's sweet simplicity, and his innocence therein, and present them before God, that would be some consolation; but that they should appear before God with their whole soul contorted,—their reason suborned and made false; their conscience perverted; their moral sense death-struck; all their best affections scarred and marred; and their whole life a stupendous folly, a grand mistake, a blunder throughout,—that is too sad to contemplate. Lower than the birds, lower than the insects, lower than the very reptiles, all of whom fulfill the duties of their spheres, lower than the lowest thing, they shall rise and stand before God; and to the demand, "Where are the powers that I entrusted to you?" they will show but the wreck and ruin of themselves. Oh! in that tremendous hour, when they shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt, then, *then*, the Voice from the dark overhanging cloud will descend upon their ear, saying,

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

May God give you wisdom, in all humility, to look unto Jesus, and through Jesus unto God, who giveth liberally to those that lack wisdom, and upbraideth not; who heareth them that cry to him, saying, "Thou art the God of my youth;" those who believe that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; those who believe that long life and prosperity are to be sought by earnestly seeking God and cleaving unto him.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Father, we bless thy name that thou hast made thyself known to us; that we behold thee in Jesus our Lord; that so much of thy nature is disclosed in him; that we are so brought near to thee by this, that thou hast been like unto ourselves; *in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin.* There is no sorrow on earth the like of which thou hast not felt. All the ways by which temptations come thou hast walked; and there is no soul on which the shadow shall fall darker than it fell on thine. There is no yoke heavier than thy neck did bear; and no spear sharper than that which pierced thy side. Having learned by tasting our lot and experience, having been made a perfect Captain of our salvation, we are encouraged to draw near to thee, in that thou canst succor, and in that thou canst sympathize. And we rejoice that thou hast a fellow feeling. For, although thou wert without sin, thou dost behold those that sin. And thou hast been so near them, and art thyself so full of love, that thou canst have compassion upon those who are out of the way. Thou dost not scorn us because of our wrong-doing. Men who are themselves sinners; men who are from time to time forgiven of God, turn with scorn from their fellow-men, and tread hard upon those who are weak and sinful; but with thee that art pure, without spot or blemish, is mercy and gentleness, and great forbearance. For thou wouldst

not that any should perish. Thou wouldst that all be brought through repentance to salvation. And thou art sparing. Thou hast spared in times past. And there are many in thy presence this evening that have provoked thee, that have withstood thee, that have disobeyed thee, that have scorned thee. There are many who have been willing to consume the mercies of God ignobly and requite nothing. They have rejoiced to see the fullness of thine open hand; but thine hand with the sceptre and with law they have despised. And yet, thou hast not forgotten to be gracious to them. Thou causest the sun to rise upon the good and upon the evil; upon the just and upon the unjust. Thou art sending thy bounties to them from day to day.

Oh Lord! we beseech of thee that thy goodness may lead men to repentance; that they may not provoke thee by turning thy goodness into an argument of presumption; that they may not harden themselves, and destroy their own souls, by the very messengers and mercies which were sent for their salvation. We pray that thou wilt give to us to night an open ear, a softness of heart, and an alert conscience. Grant, we pray thee, that there may be some to-night who shall consider their ways and be wise. We pray that thou wilt by thy Spirit move upon the heart; and that thou wilt give the truth a lodgment therein; and that it may be as seed sown in good ground; and that it may spring up and bring forth a hundred fold.

Confirm all that are beginning to walk in the Christian life. Though they see dimly, and are as little children, may they still persevere, knowing that God will hold them up. If there are any that are surrounded with dangers and temptations more than they are able to bear, strengthen them in the hour of trial. Hold them up by thine own arm, that they may not fall.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that all those who are sitting in darkness and in trouble, and all those whose faith is failing, and who seem to themselves ready to perish without succor, may find thee a present help in time of trouble. Give sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. Grant we beseech of thee, that thy mercies may abound, and that all through this great assembly there may be hearts responsive to thy touch, breaking forth into thanksgiving and praise for the wonderful things which the Lord shall do unto them.

We pray that thou will grant thy blessing to go forth from church to church, and strengthen the hands of thy servants who preach, and of those that gather together devoutly to serve the Lord. We pray that those may be blessed who go forth to teach others, and visit the neglected, and search out those that need succor. And may the mercy which they bear to others be visited in great abundance upon their own souls.

And we beseech of thee that thy kingdom may come, and thy will be done in all the earth, and the whole world see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon thy word, and make it carry light and conviction to those who need it. We pray that thou wilt help all good men to warn those that are imperiled. May we not be content to carry our own light unblown-out, nor to keep our own garments from being soiled. May we seek also to serve others. May we be wise to save them, that we may shine as the stars in the firmament, having turned many to righteousness.

Wilt thou bless us now as we are dismissed. Go home with us. Bless the week. Help us to carry truth and justice into all its duties, and through every hour. And finally, through all the trials of life, bring us at last safely to our eternal home in heaven, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

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